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LORD CLIVE

WOLF H. HARNESS

L O R D C L I V E

THE CONQUEROR OF INDIA

TRANSLATED BY DOROTHY HARRISON

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FOREWORD

This book takes as its subject the life of Robert Clive. It tells of little Bob, of Styche, in the county of Shropshire in England, of the good-for-nothing who was the grief of his parents, the abomination of his teachers, the terror of his home town, the seducer of his school-fellows, and who was finally sent to India, where the pepper grows, to die there of a fever.

It tells of the unhappy young clerk, who quarrelled with God, and finally took pistol in hand to bring his life to a premature end.

It tells of the strange ensign who cast those around him into astonishment and terror, of the youthful captain who founded England's glory in India, of the lieutenant-colonel who was bold to the point of fool-hardiness in battle, and adept to the point of wisdom in counsel.

It tells of the victor of Plassey, of the conqueror of India, the founder of that Empire, up till now the mightiest and the last, the statesman, the Lord of Ireland, the Baron of Plassey, the Nabob Clive, honoured out of all reason, and insulted to the depths of his heart, the despised, the sick man, the suicide.

And it tells – first and last – of a human creature who was pursued by superhuman misfortune, as by superhuman good fortune, who was more ardently blessed and more bitterly cursed than any other man born of woman.

CLIVE'S FAME

The renown of the man of scarcely five-and-twenty filled the world, which set his name by those of the greatest commanders, Alexander, Condé, Charles the Twelfth. Yes,

and on closer examination, the name of Clive shines more brightly than that of his greatest rivals in youthful military fame, for these, though they boasted scarcely more years than Clive, were, nevertheless, prepared for the soldier's task, and surrounded and advised by old and proved army leaders. Robert Clive, however, stood alone and independent in the face of a multiplicity of foes.

He had not only to fight the French marshals, experienced in war, and the overwhelming superiority of the Indian hosts, he had to wage a tough guerilla warfare against his own camp, for he was all too often hindered in his plans by narrowminded superior officers and comrades who sought, certainly with the best intentions, but none the less prejudicially, to frustrate the wise measures of the youthful hero.

Clive's renown, however, was not only based on success in war. As with his great contemporary, Frederick, recognition of the greatness of the advocate's son was bound up with the subsequent exertions to vindicate by well-doing the force he had used. Both heroes, by working for the pacification and welfare of humanity, atoned for the numerous dealings which are indissolubly bound up with the imposition of power, and the acquisition of warlike renown. Thus Frederick the Second won his world-famed title 'The Great' as a result of his efforts to heal the wounds he himself had dealt, and thus from Clive's third stay in India is reckoned the upright administration of the huge oriental Empire. He it was who "first waged a bold and unsparing struggle against a monstrous system of oppression, extortion and corruption. With manly decision, he staked in this struggle his peace, his reputation, and his brilliant abilities. If the yoke of foreign rulers, otherwise the heaviest in all other places, was found lighter in India than that of any native dynasty, if that band of predatory functionaries, who, before, spread terror over the whole plain of Bengal, is followed by a body of officials who

have earned as much distinction by their dexterity and zeal as by their honesty and selflessness, and their care for the common weal – a great part of the credit of it is due to Robert Clive”.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CLIVE

As little, however, as Frederick the Great is significant purely for the history of Prussia, so little does the influence of Clive end with the boundaries of the British possessions. Our preoccupation with this extraordinary personality leads us directly into the realm of world events. His private life was lived among contemporaries who are forgotten and belong to the past, but the perspective before which it completes itself has not yet changed upon the great stage of the world.

At the commencement of any historical review, we treat of men and their deeds still in relation to their time and environment. But it is only now that the influence of these men beyond that which they desired, realised and achieved in the daily course of their lives and their few hours of enlightenment – their influence on the future, which they themselves could neither see nor estimate but which for us has become the past and therefore subject to examination – it is only now that this influence becomes of historical importance. And it is the description of their influence that raises the writer from story-teller to true historian. This book sets out to delineate Clive the man, and his actions in relation to their time and environment, in so far as the India, the England, and the France of the eighteenth century lend themselves to reconstruction through books, papers, and documentary evidence, used with conscientious study and critical selection. It remains a novel and refuses to be other than a simple story. Only in the course of these introductory sentences does it attempt to draw perspectives and enumerate the historical consequences of Clive's life and work.

When Clive appears, the two greatest colonising peoples, England and France, have been engaged in a duel that has lasted for decades. When he leaves the stage, the struggle has been decided – largely through his agency – in favour of England.

To Clive's victory at Plassey the Indian continent owes the most significant and pleasant transformation recorded in its five thousand years of history.

To Clive's victory at Plassey England owes her predominance in India, the most significant and pleasant turn of events recorded in its two thousand years of history.

To England's predominance in India is due the world importance of the Empire. In recording the history of England, it is generally recognised that this world importance was born on the 23rd June, in the year 1757, the very day of the victory at Plassey.

To England's world importance is due the greater part of all political, military and economic events which have altered the face of the world in the last hundred and fifty years – a space of time extending from the peace of 1763 to the present day. Of the alliances made, the wars declared and waged, the peaceful settlements agreed upon, in this century and a half, a surprisingly large number may be regarded as consequences of Clive's victory at Plassey.

The world importance of England became for many peoples a far-reaching turn of fate. This was differently judged by different nations, but in the great majority of cases – though often after preliminary resistance – was in the end thankfully accepted.

But even today in English politics, and hence in the politics of the whole world, hardly anything occurs which is not directly or indirectly bound up with the problem of India. If nine tenths of England's wars, preparations for war, and measures of every sort in the last hundred and fifty years, were concerned with the conquest of India and its assurance, then nine tenths of her present exertions are

concerned with preserving her hold on India. England is as much India as India is England. The two cannot be separated.

If examples are required to make clear the significance of the Empire, we must go back to the Imperium Romanum. The empires of Charles the Fifth and Louis the Fourteenth dwindle, as regards their duration and compass to small scale models, beside the Roman or the British Empire.

When one has once measured through, in all its branching consequences, the whole importance and meaning of the existence of the British Empire, one feels driven to the conclusion that in this world (at least in so far as democratic countries come under consideration) scarcely a hair falls from the head of a minister or an ambassador, without having, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, some association with the problem of India.

Thus the decision at Plassey carries on its influence, right up to the events of 1908, 1914, and beyond them, to the events of the present day.

A REMARKABLE OBSERVATION

The fact, that an event of such epoch-making importance as the setting up of English lordship in India by no means found the place due to it in the consciousness of men belongs to the realm of the inexplicable and the remarkable. To say nothing of Clive, who – although he must be reckoned among the greatest builders of the modern world and its political, economic and intellectual state – is known outside England only by name.

But even in the larger part of the British public, there was, until a few years ago, no sort of clear recognition of the significance of India for England. Thus Lord George Nathaniel Curzon of Kettleston, many years Viceroy of India, complained that his fellow-countrymen had not yet come to realise what the possession of India meant to England. It is significant that his speech, "The Place of India

in the Empire", that deals circumstantially with the importance of India for England, and brings forward simple and primitive facts, had to be made, not before novices, but before the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh, and that in the year 1909.

Lord Curzon had cried out in astonishment that up till then people had tended to treat India as something lying outside the most important states forming our Empire. It was regarded, so to speak, as a splendid, jewelled appendage to the imperial necklace. People were of the opinion that this appendage could be entirely removed without essentially affecting the symmetry. The current opinion took India for little more than a distant patch of earth where it was true that many Englishmen had performed and were still performing remarkable deeds ... He went on to say that when the Englishman spoke of the British Empire he usually left India out of consideration and only thought of those colonies which were populated by people of our own race ... Further he declared that even the problem of national defence had often been discussed without taking into account the very point on which this question more or less hinged, that is to say India. Thus it was that the Englishman finally rose in horror from his indifference when he heard of serious unrest in India. Now, for the first time, he realised to his astonishment that, in spite of everything, India was not so much an encumbrance as a source of our strength ...

CONSEQUENCES FOR INDIA OF CLIVE'S ACHIEVEMENT

At the moment when the bitter struggle begins between England and France for the lordship of Asia, a new chapter opens for the inhabitants of India. The age of Islam, which dates from the year 1001, is carried to the grave

with the body of Surajah Dowla. The two decades whose climax was the year 1757, decide the struggle between the French and the British, in favour of the latter. The dramatic events which were played out during this time on the plains of Bengal, and the Coast of Coromandel, represent the first chapter of the New Time in India, and it is with them that this book is concerned.

The year 1757 means, in fact, for India, the institution of a new foreign lordship, but there had been foreign rulers there for five thousand years. The appearance of the English rule, nevertheless, brings, for the first time in the history of India, humanity and civilisation into that most unhappy of lands. The only rule that had existed hitherto, had been a pure reign of terror, and to all her conquerors – with the exception of Alexander the Great – India had been nothing but an object of exploitation.

So Timur, the lame prince of the House of Jagatai, set up his court in Delhi, after thirty-five campaigns, and ruled over three quarters of the known world.

A century and a half later, Baber, his great-grandson, founded the Mongolian dynasty of the Grand Moguls. Delhi was his capital, and thence, for centuries, the capital of India.

When the dying Sultan Baber, son of Omar the Lion, advised his eldest son, "Do not kill your brothers, but watch tenderly over them!" his words died away unheeded.

There followed the kingdom of Akbar, whose lordship extended from Afghanistan to Orissa, and from the Himalayas to the river Narbada.

So it went on to the kingdom of the Mahrattas, to Mohammed Shah, who mounted the Timurid throne in 1720, and to Kuli Khan-Nadir, the Persian king, who waded to the throne of Delhi through a sea of blood.

Had Clive been defeated, and had Dupleix won the lordship of India in his place, the ambitious Frenchman would have been able to realise his dream of an Empire

in India, power and violence would have triumphed, for this purest type of conqueror dreamed of nothing but pomp and splendour, of gold and pearls, of white elephants and diamond crowns, of power, power and again power. His plan was a direct and not even a fine copy of what the Timurids had done before him, and what Nadir Shah was carrying out before his eyes. Like all the rest, he wished to possess, to rob and to plunder, to play the lord.

But Clive's work contributed to a state of which only one before him in all the past had dreamed: Alexander the Great.

When we read that Alexander aspired to set free, in so far as they understood freedom or could learn to be free, those who hitherto had been ruled like slaves – then comparisons force themselves upon us with many of the plans which England has begun to put into practice in India, and continues to perfect. And if it is said in praise of Alexander, that it was a true kingly action to preserve for the conquered what was sacred to them and most their own, then this praise cannot justly be withheld from England. The motives are the same in both cases; both recognised that the *true* advantage does not lie in brutal exercise of power, and that conciliation leads more directly to the goal. Both conciliate because they wish to win, and only the man who is inwardly won can be a sharer in the Empire.

Alexander knew that he who desires the end must also desire the means, and that the end must, later, justify the means. So he assumed the skin of the Asiatics. He sought to insinuate himself into Asiatic life, he sought to grasp from within the meaning of Asia, thus to be able to govern it. So he came, through inward necessity, to assume Eastern robes, to honour the gods of the East, and to accept Eastern ceremonial. There was to be no more talk of conquerors and conquered, and the distinction between Hellenes and barbarians was to be forgotten. It was his ambition, the

aim of his victories, the vision towards which he aspired with all the forces of his fiery heart, to create an Empire of East and West on the Hellenic model. He was the first human being to bear in his heart the image of a European-Asiatic realm, such as has arisen in the Empire.

But Alexander's powerful vision of the union of the lands of evening and morning came true for only a few years. Only for a short time were broken the dark powers by which the peoples of Asia were held together till his appearance, and by which after his death they were held in thrall for another two thousand years. With the death of the creator, the masterpiece broke asunder. For two thousand years, Alexander remained the last who wished to win the heart of Asia, the last who proposed to lead it towards good fortune, peace and a higher culture.

Leaving aside the difference of centuries, a strange parallel appears. With Clive and his successors, the things were carried out less in costume, less in clothing, but thereby all the more strongly in the reality that underlies clothing. Clive gave rise, for the second time, to a development which leads, beyond the imposition of outward force, to the inward conquest, to colonisation.

Now England's solicitude for India rests by no means on moral considerations alone, or even on a contempt of power, or on weak defeatism, but on the principle of highest utility.

The more we absorb ourselves in English dealing and thinking, the more it strikes us that there is but one aim for English politicians: the raising of the standard of their fellow-countrymen. For the Englishman, this aim is identical with the purpose of the State, as a whole. According to his opinion, the reason of the State, and the justification of its existence, are only to smooth out as far as possible for the greatest possible number of citizens the way which leads to the gaining of the highest possible standard of well-being. Both employer and worker are to earn as much as

may be. Everything must be subservient to this highest principle. The State is to make the attainment of well-being possible for each individual, since, according to the English view, the State is composed of individuals. We are repeatedly struck by the absence of any ideology whatsoever. It is easy to make fun of this, and to explain that, for the English, cotton takes the place of philosophy. In reality, they are pure utilitarians, they never fix their eyes upon principles, but always upon what is profitable. This fact must be kept in mind, if one is to understand the English attitude.

Of course, the English position as regards India remains fundamentally the pure and unadulterated standpoint of power. Sir William Joynson Hicks, Baldwin's Home Secretary, gives verbal expression to this view when he says: - "We did not conquer India for the sake of the Indians and only in a missionary meeting would anyone maintain that we had conquered it in order to raise the cultural standard of the Indians. That is sheer hypocrisy. We conquered India much more in order to ensure an outlet for our export-goods. We conquered the land with the sword and we must keep it with the sword (cries of 'shame'). Say what you will, I am concerned with facts. I cannot pretend and say that we hold India for the sake of the Indians. We keep a firm hold of the country because there is no better market for British goods in general and for Lancashire cotton goods in particular."

England holds fast by this principle of power. But she varies the fashion in which she employs the power. Towards the middle of last century, she begins to turn away from a brutal egoismo, and to strive after a sacro egoismo. The old view, that England had to follow out a purely English policy, and that the policy must serve the real and immediate raising of the standard of well-being of every single one of its citizens, is from now on to be brought into harmony with the purification and well-being of as many peoples as possible.

In one of his dramas, Lessing coins the phrase "the true advantage" which, once recognised, makes the most egotistical person the cleverest, in such a way that cleverness and wisdom become one.

England believes she has recognised that a true advantage is not to be gained without a certain measure of ethics in general, of honesty in small things as in great. In every good business, as in every good agreement, there is the necessary condition that both partners find their benefit, and are convinced of the usefulness of their dealings. "In the conquest of India, the confidence that the natives could set on our word and bond furthered our cause more than all the battles won; this is true as much of the customary promise of punctual repayment of a credit, as of agreements of a territorial, military or political nature" – to this effect did Clive once express himself in later years. From this example, we recognise how England feels herself moved to moral dealings from utilitarian grounds. She begins to carry over the moral principles of loyalty and faith, practised hitherto only in civil life, and in the relations of man to man, into political conditions and the life of nations. And if, as Wilhelm von Humboldt says, culture is nothing but the humanisation of the nations in their outward customs and their inner feelings, then England is working towards culture.

Her solicitude turns increasingly towards India, in the measure in which she regards India as more and more a part of herself. In 1858, the British State sets itself, as successor, in the place of the East India Company, and the government passes over directly to the Crown of England: in 1876, India is declared an Empire, and, a year later, Queen Victoria becomes Empress of India. Now a blissful activity sets in: railways are built, rivers regulated, means of transport increased by land and sea, schools, gas-works, museums, hospitals set up. Perhaps what has happened is not yet enough. That it happens at all, and must continue

to happen, since the movement has once been started, proves that the need has been recognised.

One could object that it is easy for one who is in possession and in power to preserve peace. Even a beast of prey can be moved out of the pleasant activity of digestion to an attack only with difficulty and against its will. Such a consideration appears superfluous in face of the fact; and let no less a one than Heinrich von Kleist be our witness for the crown, when he says that each must make it as easy as possible for himself to be virtuous.

For, even without ethical maxims, England could hold fast for decades longer to the pure unadulterated politics of power. She might be entirely content with the possession of India, she is bound by nothing but her moral constitution to ennoble, even to improve it, where the improvement does not find immediate expression in positive gain. No word is so misleading as that of the Roman Sallust: *Omne imperium iis solum artibus renitetur quibus ab initio partum est*. (All power is maintained only by the means through which it was first achieved.)

Power is attained by *different* means, preserved and employed by different ones.

This is neither the place to ascertain what England has done for India, nor to decide whether – as is maintained by the many times over-estimated and proportionately insignificant groups of Indian nationalists – she owes the continent far more than freedom and national independence. That the English lordship bears good fruit, however, is proved by the attitude of the Indian population to its lord.

Lord Curzon, in the speech previously quoted, gives us a survey of the disposition of the different casts and classes of India. His representations, which are perfectly in agreement with what is reported by us others, impartial judges, run more or less as follows: – “If we had surrendered our possession of India half or three quarters of a century ago or if we had been driven out of it, India would have had

to have fought out its destiny in a sea of blood ... In every war the Indian princes have voluntarily offered us armed assistance. They are enthusiastic supporters of England partly because they have always been used to acknowledging a ruler over them (the Mogul was as foreign to the majority of them as we are) and partly because they see in the British Crown the one, sure guarantee of their existence and their rights. The educated classes fall into those who recognise the absolute necessity of the English dominion so that peace may prevail and India be able to develop progressively and into those who lend an ear to Indian national feeling and patriotism. A small section of these is definitely rebellious and hostile towards us. Nevertheless, the majority of the people, in so far as they are not affected by the wave of incredulity or by fanaticism, are inclined to be loyal subjects of any ruler who gives them food and payment. Perhaps the only kind of loyalty in which they all join is loyalty to the person of the ruler, a fact which is founded not only on the preference for a personal rule and the supreme authority of the Crown which prevails in the east but also in the impression made by the virtue and sympathetic character of our late Queen Victoria, the character of our present King (i. e. Edward the Seventh) and the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales."

How impartial historians, however, will judge of England's merits as regards India, we may learn from the German historian Karl Friedrich Neumann, "History of the British Empire in Asia". The author, in his introduction to this book, which has become a classic, reasons, concisely stated, somewhat as follows: "the uniting, under one lord, of lands or boundaries hitherto isolated, the pacification of this district, the reconciliation of its inhabitants, who had been forcibly separated by priestly fraud and craving for power, the leading of it back to the rest of mankind, the raising of it out of a state of ossification and moral de-

pravity to new human life and to a certain independence in the system of the world states: all this was and is reserved for the most westerly state of the Old World. Through these great deeds, England expiates the innumerable crimes which are bound up with conquest, through these great deeds her predominance receives its belated moral justification after the event."

It is Clive's glory to have been the first to establish for India the recognition that might must be separated from right, that pacification, justice and security must be the ethical, as much as the practical means and end of policy. This glory is all the brighter in that it was kindled in the face of an object which hitherto had seemed to exist to be nothing but an object of plunder.

CONSEQUENCES FOR ENGLAND AND THE WORLD

In his 'History of British Foreign Policy' Arthur Russell assures us that the Peace of Paris marks the zenith of British power in the eighteenth century and that the foundations of the British Empire were laid then and its expansion in India and Canada predetermined. And de Tocqueville maintains that England has won its world importance through the events connected with the conquest and government of India.

From the moment when Clive fights the battle of Plassey and England establishes itself in India, a definite line is prescribed for British policy. This line is followed unswervingly. When the realisation forces itself upon London and Calcutta that in the event of war India cannot be held without South Africa, the latter is taken. Since the annexation of the former Boer Republic, England has control of the two quoins and pillars of the Indian Ocean. From now on she alone of all nations is in a position to guide the fate of this sea.

Thus the Indian Ocean becomes an English Medi-

terranean, a 'mare britannicum'. Around it are grouped the Asiatic, African and Australian limbs of the British Empire. Africa is divided between France and England on account of it. England leaves the west and central regions of the black continent to the Gauls. The east, however, and the approaches and strategic points covering these approaches become English possessions.

In his work 'The Growth of Empire' Arthur Jose declares that in order to reach India our sea heroes have hurled themselves against America and that in order to protect our trade with India we have seized South Africa. All roads lead to India and they are all linked together by our fortified places and coaling stations.

In his book, 'Problems of the Far East', Lord Curzon declares that, "her central and commanding position is nowhere better seen than in the political influence which she exercises over the destinies of her neighbours near and far, and the extent to which their fortunes revolve upon an Indian axis. The independence of Afghanistan, the continued national existence of Persia, the maintenance of Turkish rule at Bagdad, are one and all dependent upon Calcutta. Nay, the radiating circle of her influence overlaps the adjoining continents, and affects alike the fate of the Bosphorus and the destinies of Egypt. The heritage of the Indian Empire has within the last ten years made us the land-neighbours of China and has multiplied threefold the area of our diplomacy at Peking. Even the fortunes of remote Korea are in a manner bound up with the politics of Hindustan ... Such and so supreme is the position enjoyed in the Asian continent by the Empire of the Kaiser-i-Hind."

And in the Edinburgh speech mentioned above he says that he chose India as the main subject of his address because he wanted to bring home the conviction that India is an important part in the construction of our state now and in the future and that our Empire cannot exist without

India. Had it not been for India Lord Beaconsfield would not have bought the Suez Canal shares; had it not been for the Suez Canal we should not have been in Egypt now. The historic antagonism and struggle with Russia lasting nearly a hundred years arose from the necessity of keeping her away from India. Had it not been for the sake of India we should never have taken possession of the Cape or have expanded at all in South Africa where we have only recently passed through such a severe crisis. Without India we should never have been in a position to incarcerate Napoleon's mighty spirit in the rocky prison of St. Helena. Mauritius would not have been ours. Nor would we have attained such a supreme position in Mesopotamia or have taken control of the Persian Gulf. India compelled us to lay hands on Aden, a position of incomparable importance and to take over the protectorate of the neighbouring parts of Arabia. India showed us the way to those conquests which did not stop till they reached the snow walls of the Himalayas and which raised us from a little island with commercial and maritime interests to the greatest power in the world. Through India we came into contact with the Straits Settlements (which were formerly under the Governor General of India) and with China and Japan. The foundations of our formerly untrodden and now most powerful position in the Far East.

And so it is clear that the ruler of India must, under modern conditions, have the greatest power in the continent of Asia and with it one may well add, in the whole world.

Moreover we must not forget that India is more than a figure, more than a king or a queen on the chess-board of Asia. It is a main figure on the chess-board of international politics.

Finally, let us glance briefly at some statistics:

British India produces, annually, wares of the most varied kind, to a total value of ten milliards of gold dollars.

The agriculture yields 35 million tons of rice, 3 million tons of sugar, 10 million tons of wheat, 6 million bales of cotton.

The dairy produce of India is worth more than 500 million dollars.

The cotton mills employ 400 000 hands, the jute mills 300 000.

Again Lord Curzon points out that if we remember that out of every four subjects of the King, three are Indians, that after London, Calcutta is the largest city in the whole Empire, that next to China, India is the greatest and most populous political entity in the world then we will realise so what an extent the British Empire is an Asiatic Empire. The foundations of this Empire building are in England where they were laid and are protected by British manpower. The colonies form its pillars and high above the whole hangs the mighty expanse of the Asiatic dome.

It was not only Englishmen who grasped, however, what importance India had for the world. When Peter the Great died – it was the year of Robert Clive's birth – his will contained the words: "Do not forget that trade with India means world trade, and that whoever exclusively controls it is master of Europe."

RHYME AND REASON

Once more a historico-philosophical problem forces itself upon us. Clive's life furnishes a new proof that much that we believe to be destiny is, in reality, accident: that our posthumous historical considerations are, in many cases, nothing but a belated attempt to explain what is, in itself, inexplicable.

For, as a matter of fact, when Robert Clive first set foot upon the coast of Madras, nothing was further from his thoughts than the conquest of India. He had come, as we shall see, to earn a paltry, grudging living. He set out to

find an ass, and found a kingdom. Even when the man of thirty won the battle of Plassey, he still suspected nothing of the bearing and world significance of his victory. His name was already referred to alongside those of Caesar and Frederick, before he began to grasp the consequence of his action. By then, however, the greater part of his life was already behind him. During these first three decades, his thought was for the day, for his neighbour, for what must come to pass because nothing else could. It was the small duties of everyday that ruled him. Often, when we observe his deeds, we have the feeling that it worked out of him and through him, but the deep meaning that the English and others have later read into his accomplishment was, in fact, from the first without his intentions, considerations and plans.

Thus he has become a shining example of how a utilitarian, just because he does nothing but what is practical and immediate, may outgrow himself, and bring about great things out of his little occasions. By stating this, we do not diminish his greatness by an inch. His foresight of what others would do was just as great as his determination to carry out his dealings according to this foresight. Thus he became ever more what he had been – although it was latent in his early youth: the incarnation of sound human understanding, of the practical man, the realist, the Englishman. At all times, and in all situations, he knew what ought to be done, – and that he did what was necessary constitutes his greatness.

Alongside the general and statesman, there is also a private individual, Robert Clive, a man who exhibits greatness and depth, strength and weakness, light and shade each in a high degree of concentration. Thus he stands before us as one of the greatest dramatic, even tragic, figures of world history, a strange combination of strength and weakness. He does what is nearest and becomes a hero, he lets himself be led by his sound human intelligence and

and becomes a seer and prophet, he yields to his passions and impulses, and grows far beyond himself into an image of human greatness.

England owes to him India, and India owes to him her liberation from the shameful and tormenting oppression of many hundreds of despots, and liberation and guidance into a state of civilisation.

The most remarkable thing about this man and the events which are bound up with his name is still the incomprehensible contrast between the immediate, primitive, daily intentions, and the disproportionate results, illuminating all that has been, and having their influence on the history of the world.

PART ONE

1744—1750

War!

The seven guns which barked out from the citadel over the town and fortress of Pondicherry meant war with England. Everyone in the White Town was convinced of that. Already the suspicious haste with which events followed upon each other permitted of this dreadful supposition. The "Duke of Bourbon" had hardly appeared in the roads of Pondicherry, and the courier, seized upon by the coolies, had hardly been hoisted out of the dispatch boat and borne to land, when there was heard that sevenfold signal, which was only given in the most unusual and urgent circumstances; it concerned the members of the High Council, and summoned them to betake themselves immediately to a conference at Government House.

War with England had been expected for three years. Every number of the "Mercure" and the "Gazette de Hollande", reaching Pondicherry after a journey of many months from Paris and Amsterdam, told of incidents, conflicts and hostilities. In the most varied scenes of action collisions had taken place, skirmishes and trifling engagements between detachments of English and French troops. The tension had increased from year to year, had influenced all measures taken and all dealings, and had poisoned private as it had public life.

No one asked for what reason this war should be waged — what deeper motive, what outward occasion. As long as anyone could remember, England and France had fought against each other. Many declared that this time it was a question of predominance in the world. That might or might not be so; in general the word 'predominance' was

understood, but no very definite idea was associated with it. War – that meant for each one another thing, something different for the peasant from what it was for the banker, the citizen, the soldier. According to the varying geographical points of observation, other ideas and methods were associated with it, those of America, Africa and the Rhine different from those of India. Here, on the coast of Coromandel, war meant Pondicherry against Madras; in Bengal, it meant Calcutta against Chandernagore. You could conquer and win, or be conquered and lose. It remained uncertain, however, whether in a future peace treaty, you would keep what you had won, or be obliged to give up what you had lost. Peace treaties were drawn up in a palace somewhere in Paris or London, or in a watering-place, and it was only months later that the individual learnt what the results of this peace meant for his town, his village, or, above all – for himself.

However, after the many contradicting reports, it was a relief to know that a systematic war had emerged from the chaos of uncontrolled hostilities and pinpricks. Today, at last, they would see clearly where they stood. The whole town was trembling with excitement. In the offices, the bookkeepers lifted startled noses from the ledgers in which they were scrawling, depressed and hungry, and stared curiously into the streets. In the bonding-houses, the clerks left their bales of goods, put their heads together and whispered excitedly. The merchants stepped out from behind their counters, gathered in groups under the porticoes of their houses and discussed the town's position.

Things did not look well in Pondicherry! Business had seriously declined in the last years, the sustained imports of silver had led to a rise in prices, and it was no more than an open secret that an entire ebb prevailed in the public funds. The garrison consisted of poor wretches, tramps, arrested on the French chaussees, convicts, taken from their cells for military service and fetched over by force, and

was, moreover, reduced by desertion and illness. The moats were filled to the brim with rubbish, with corpses, with garbage of all descriptions, the walls and ramparts fallen in. The only exception was the citadel. It had just been set in order by an extremely able young man, who bore the remarkable surname of Paradis, and the even more remarkable christian name of Paris – and this was undoubtedly a merit of Governor Dupleix.

All hopes were firmly built on the new governor, appointed a year earlier. The only thing preventing a panic was the consciousness of possessing this unusual head of affairs. With Dupleix as governor, there was some hope of resisting the English. This man conjured up ships of war, cannon, regiments and fortifications. He was, indeed, "*un vieil homme de Pondicherry*". Already, twenty years ago, he had presided over the High Council of Pondicherry, and during his term of office, the number of inhabitants had augmented from nine thousand to forty thousand persons. And he was, moreover, scarcely more than twenty at the time! Since then, he had been summoned to Bengal, and had worked wonders there. Under his government, the town had grown to a hundred thousand inhabitants, the old crumbling mud huts had given way to houses and stores made of stone, the revenue had increased tenfold. It was well known that this was the work of Dupleix. Now he was expected to perform similar marvels on the coast of Coromandel. It was, indeed, a great good fortune that he had been brought back in the previous year, as one might say, five minutes before the catastrophe.

While the excited merchants talked on in this strain, the palanquins of the councillors made their way within an hour of the discharge of the seven guns through the streets of the town to the government building.

This lay, only half completed, but already fully occupied, upon the so-called citadel, and turned towards the town its front of eight and twenty heavy Ionic pillars.

Under this facade, the palanquin-bearers now stopped. Clumsily, spitting and groaning, the councillors rolled out of their expensive litters, that were so splendidly adorned with precious stones and pearls, so richly equipped with bolsters, cushions and silken curtains that they could well vie with the palanquins of the Indian princes.

The palanquin and the fan – the whole colourful life of old India rises before us with these two objects, and the slim, brown-skinned, half-naked fellows who handle them. The palanquins sway through all the streets, borne along in smart time by four, six or eight bearers, accompanied by two or three musicians, who with their music, set the time for the bearers, surrounded by fan-coolies, who keep their slender bamboo rods and broad palm-leaves in constant motion. Lying in these palanquins, and tended by these fan-coolies, one travels through India, writing, reading, eating and smoking. Even in a town of so small extent as Pondicherry, the European of any importance seldom goes about his business on foot. The palanquin and the fan-coolie – they survive the change of centuries of rulers and of cultures, and disappear only when they are driven out by the motor-car and the ventilator.

Followed by their secretaries, fan-bearers and servants of all kinds, the councillors betook themselves to the great hall of session. Here, they sank, groaning and sweating, into the comfortable, richly carved, gilded and damask-covered arm-chairs which Mr. Dupleix had ordered, and which the government ship had brought over on its last voyage.

Of the twelve gentlemen who composed the council of Pondicherry, ten were now assembled. The eleventh, Captain Combault d'Auteuil, the commander of the Pondicherry dragoons, had not appeared, which surprised no one, for they were accustomed to the fact that the soldier should only now and then be present at the sittings of the High Council.

It aroused, on the other hand, the general attention, that Mr. Paradis, the twelfth and youngest of the councillors, was lacking. He had been called into the council only a few days before at the Governor's request, a distinction earned by his untiring work on the fortifications of the citadel.

In spite of the haste with which the gentlemen of Pondicherry had responded to the summons, they had yet taken the time to supplement their customary Indian daily toilet; they had clapped on their white perukes, and slipped into the gay velvet coats, embroidered with gold or silver, in which one appeared on official occasions. They certainly felt assured of going to a significant, momentous, fateful session.

Each one of them turned over plans and propositions in his head aching with fear, fever and heat. For each, it was a question of raising an infinite wealth of questions, and recommending measures concerning the police or the military.

"Are the English armed, or are they not?" M. La Farelle, the stoutest of all stout councillors wanted to know. He was one of those men who are as easily excited as they are soothed. La Farelle was excited, and the dusky red of his face today gleamed about a tone darker even than usual, almost purple, while twitches ran over it like waves and told of the grisly fear possessing the soul of La Farelle.

His question died away unheard, for no one answered him. Apparently each of the councillors was occupied with his own thoughts, for they sat there almost motionless, and stared glassily and sweating before them.

Only Miron, by trade a dealer in steel wares, chiefly knives and daggers, by origin a Gascon, and therefore small, lean, nervy, warm-blooded and lively, fidgeted uncomfortably on his chair, and finally had his secretary hand him a comprehensive memorandum covered with proposals

concerning new fortifications to be built, and new divisions of troops to be drawn up, and containing questions concerning the state of finances, and the stocks in hand of weapons and munitions. He was the only one who was entirely dissatisfied with Dupleix, for he had indeed hoped, the previous year, to be appointed to the position of governor. At last the double doors flew open, a host of brown-skinned, half-naked men, whose snow-white garments displayed the initials of Dupleix, flowed into the hall of session, and drew themselves up in rows.

Then His Excellency, M. Joseph Francois Dupleix entered. Directly behind him came M. Paris Paradis, followed by the clerks and fan-bearers.

Dupleix was wearing the everyday clothes in which he was accustomed to discharge the duties of his office, the simple coat of light blue velvet, embroidered with silver, the gay flowered silk waistcoat, the black breeches and stockings; he had not even taken time to put on the ribbons of his orders. An absent and worried expression of unusually tense haste, lay on his face, although he at once made an attempt to display his customary assurance and decision. Short, broad-shouldered, squat and almost stout, he detached himself with a hasty step from his suite, and made for his presidential chair, which, raised a little on a wooden box, occupied the narrow space between the window side of the hall and the end of the table.

The councillors rose, slowly and clumsily. The general heavy breathing increased in volume, as they bowed formally before the Governor. In silence, he returned the greeting with a bow that was no less deep and respectful.

For a moment profound stillness prevailed in the room. Nothing moved except the fans, which continued their regular and unbroken activity – sinking, rising and sinking again, in that modest, beneficial and for the Europeans so necessary motion, they stirred the air, which, but for this tireless to-and-fro and up-and-down of the long-stemmed

palm-leaves, would have lain oppressively upon eyes, temples and lungs.

At a sign from His Excellency, one of the secretaries stepped forward, lifted a leather portfolio, raised the lid and held the open dispatch case in front of the Governor's eyes.

Dupleix omitted to sit down. Thus, the councillors also felt themselves constrained to remain standing.

If the unceremonious everyday costume of the Governor had aroused general attention, his speech called forth even greater astonishment. He, who usually spoke with so much ardour, who took a pleasure in speaking, even in the smallest circles, in a loud ringing voice, who so chose and ordered his sentences that they wrung approval from the hearers, — spoke today dryly and to the point, without the slightest enthusiasm.

"Dear and honoured councillors of Pondicherry!" he began, almost murmuring. "The Minister of Finance informs me that the opening of hostilities between the kingdoms of England and France has been followed by an official declaration of war. I give you herewith, by word of mouth, the decisive sentences of the dispatch. . . ."

Dupleix bent over the open covers of the portfolio and began to read. The words dropped monotonously into the room: "From the day of arrival of this document, all the colonial stations, forts, and trading settlements are in a state of war with all corresponding dispositions of the British royal power. The employees and establishments of the British East India Company are, by the same token, to be on the same footing as the possessions of the British throne. . . ."

Dupleix, who had read without touching the portfolio, now straightened himself, and turned his eyes once more to the gathering. The secretary let his outstretched arms fall, clapped to the portfolio, and laid it aside.

"In accordance with this document", continued Dupleix, now speaking freely, "we find ourselves, on this day, 14th September, 1744, in a state of war with the neighbouring English colony. From now on, Madras and Fort St. David are no longer the object of friendly visits – from this hour on, they are English fortresses, and hence the object for our conquest.

I therefore appeal to you, my dear and respected councillors of Pondicherry, to join me in the cry: 'Long live His Most Christian Majesty, our gracious king, Louis the Fifteenth!'

"Long live the King!" rang the cry through the room, at first a little hesitatingly, but louder and more hearty at the second and third times of repetition.

The gentlemen expected that, after this ceremonious introduction, the real discussion would begin. Miron had already ostentatiously seated himself, and La Farelle was about to follow his example, when suddenly there fell on the ears of the councillors, words from the presidential chair, that cast them into the greatest astonishment.

"At this moment, gentlemen," declared Dupleix dryly, "I have nothing more to say to you. I will inform you, at the next sitting, what other orders from the crown and the ministry I have to make known and to carry out, with what I have to commission you, by power of my office, and wherein I have to seek your agreement. You shall learn, at the given time, when this session is to take place..."

And, before a word of opposition could be heard, there fell on their ears, hard and decisive, the sentence: "The session is closed."

At the same moment, the Governor turned on his heel and prepared to leave the hall. While the double doors sprang open, the secretaries and clerks flocked together to form their line, Joseph Francois Dupleix, with a courteous

but energetic nod, strode past his councillors and out of the door.

Rising from their reverence, the councillors looked at one another, mystified.

"What, the deuce, has taken possession of Dupleix? He calls us together in the greatest haste, informs us of a declaration of war, and goes away without making the slightest use of our services! He neither asks for advice nor opens a debate!" cried La Farelle, and wiped the sweat from his brow with trembling hands.

"He is not usually so abrupt, either," added Miron, shaking his head. "He delights in putting on his gold chain of office on the most ordinary occasions. Today, he appears in his everyday garments. . . ."

"Let him appear how he will, that is his own affair, but in any case he owes us an explanation," continued La Farelle. "A declaration of war is no trifle, after all!"

"Joseph Francois Dupleix, God's representative upon earth! He who loves to display himself to the astonished people on a white elephant – he who loves long speeches no less than diamonds and pearls! Astonishing! I have never seen him so before!" declared Ingrand, a fragile elderly gentleman, upon whose brow a good heart and a kindly disposition were clearly to be read.

Several of the councillors, shrugging their shoulders, made as if to leave the room. The majority seemed decided to stay. They had come here, crammed with proposals and good advice, and they had been prevented from giving vent to their dammed-up wisdom. It was no wonder that they were irritated and indignant, and disinclined to withdraw unheard, but demanded to express themselves.

"If he had at least allowed us time for a few exclamations of indignation, or of martial fury, or, in my case, of fear!" cried Ingrand, complainingly. "At such moments, a man wants to utter some sound, be it laughter or tears, exultation or groans. He must express himself, that's all!"

"Doesn't Dupleix feel, then, what a strain we are all under?" Legum agreed with him, without expecting or receiving an answer to his question.

Councillor Ingrand set himself to scolding: "No! With all due respect, that is no way to carry on affairs! Are we convicts or young children? Are we recruits receiving orders from the sergeant-major?"

"But what is the reason of it? I see no reason for such extraordinary behaviour!" shouted Miron into La Farelle's ear.

"You would like to know the reason?" shouted La Farelle, putting into his voice as much scorn as he was able to express, "Well, don't you know that this very day Mademoiselle St. Vincens..."

"Oh, I forgot! Of course, that explains it! M. Dupleix is about to marry off one of his step-daughters..." replied Miron. "And when does M. Dupleix *not* marry off a step-daughter or a sister-in-law, or a niece? I seem to have seen him doing else but give brides away. He has hardly been here a year, and this is the fourth wedding..."

"I have known him only five years in all, and have already seen him give away ten brides!" groaned La Farelle.

Thus did La Farelle and Miron converse, while the waves of indignation rose. The point had already been reached of uttering threats against Dupleix. Someone proposed that the High Council should make itself independent, and elect a new governor, another opposed it, and emphasised the senselessness of unlawful acts in the face of the menace of external enemies. Finally, it was decided to abide the next three days, but then, if nothing substantial had been decided upon for the safeguard of the town and the fortresses, to take measures against Dupleix.

Suddenly the storm raging through the hall died away; a new and startling occurrence was taking place before the eyes of the councillors. They observed, to their astonishment that M. Paradis, who, with his twenty-five years, was the

youngest among them, had occupied the place quitted by Dupleix a few minutes before, the place of the President and Governor. Why, the youngster did not even hesitate to seize the silver presidential bell, and set it in motion.

The silence which immediately ensued was thanks to the presumption of the young man, and was the spontaneous expression of indignation. M. Paradis, meanwhile, made as if he noticed nothing of the feelings aroused by his behaviour. He took the silence for an expression of approval, and profited by the brief moment before the mouths closed in horror had time to open again, to launch upon a speech:

"Dear and respected councillors of Pondicherry! I hear that some of you see in the wedding that His Excellency celebrates today, the cause of his sudden disappearance. My dear colleagues, you should know the Governor better! I believe that there is not a wedding in this world that could hold back M. Dupleix from presiding over a sitting — if he considers it necessary that he *should* preside over that sitting. I take it that the most weighty circumstances are the cause of His Excellency's sudden and surprising departure. Perhaps" suddenly M. Paradis assumed a mysterious manner, dropped his voice and continued, almost in a whisper: ". . . . perhaps M. Dupleix holds trumps in his hand that are stronger than English cannon. . . ."

"Trumps? In the devil's name, why doesn't he tell us, then?" cried Ingrand.

"Trumps that are stronger than English cannon?" joined in La Farelle, "Even if the English cannon are mounted on English ships of war?"

"And what are you doing, M. Paradis, in His Excellency's place, you, the youngest councillor?" shrieked Miron.

Before Paradis could answer, yet another councillor made himself heard: "I refuse to go to an English prison!"

shouted one of the gentlemen. "Under these circumstances, I would rather go away!" put in another. "Where would you go? The English fleet would have blockaded the coast before you had packed your bags," answered a third. And a fourth agreed with him: "We are sitting here like rats in a trap. . . ."

"The English cannon. . . ." Paradis tried to answer, but was not allowed to speak. Finally La Farelle managed to get a hearing, letting his powerful fist crash down a couple of times on the table of session.

"My respected colleagues", he began, "do not forget, in the face of the challenging behaviour of M. Paradis, that we are already in a state of war. Consider: our military position is uncertain, our fortifications insufficient, our troops unfit for battle. How long do you believe we could withstand an English attack? It is time this question were answered! Madras is near enough to Pondicherry, the English may be at the gates at this very moment."

"And in this situation, the Governor postpones the sitting!" interposed Miron, going back to the opening point of the debate.

"Does any one of you, gentleman, know the strength of our garrison?" Ingrand joined in.

Impatient cries answered him. "You want to know how strong our garrison is! M. Ingrand, are you in the habit of taking a nap? In every session we discuss how strong, or rather how weak, our garrison is. . . ."

"I know, I know!" Ingrand waved them aside, "on the pay-lists we have a thousand men. But how many have we really in arms?"

"A thousand men are a thousand men. . . ."

"I know, I know!" insisted Ingrand. "Do you not understand my question, gentlemen, or do you refuse to understand it?"

Now Paradis condescended to answer. Sounding above the general murmur, he called to Ingrand, energetically and a little contemptuously: "I understand your question very well, M. Ingrand. To tell you the truth, there are under arms exactly three hundred and fifty men!"

An outcry of dismay answered Paradis. "Three hundred and fifty men!" was heard from all sides, "Then we are lost! This is terrible!"

"The English themselves will not have more!" a consoling voice made itself heard.

Paradis kept his cheerful calm. "Yes, my dear and respected councillors of Pondicherry, we have at our disposal a full three hundred and fifty men, of whom, however, eighty are incapable of service. . . ."

"Why?"

"Because they are ill," answered Paradis, an almost gratified note in his voice.

"What a question!" Ingrand joined in, the debate once more, "Of course, because they are ill! Who isn't ill in this damned country!"

"And in this situation", screamed Miron for the hundredth time, "the Governor abandons us, and postpones the sitting. . . .!" His rage at being cheated of the opportunity of loosing his well-prepared attacks upon Dupleix was not to be withstood.

"M. Miron, M. La Forelle, all of you, gentlemen," cried Paradis now, and his voice became cutting, "The Governor was right to postpone the sitting. I perceive how clever M. Dupleix is! Would you have him let you fill his ears with your lamentations? Should he at this juncture, when he needs his nerves to. . . ."

"... to marry his daughter!" interposed the bass note of Legum, the wag of the council of Pondicherry. A snicker made itself heard somewhere, but died out quickly, stifled by the icy tone of Paradis, who went straight on:

".... to make decisions of the highest importance. I repeat, should he, at this juncture let himself be weakened by you? — You know that I was, until lately, His Excellency's secretary. From my knowledge of M. Dupleix, of his methods of work and his ways of thought, I can assure you that at this very moment he is working to set up an army and to find the money that is necessary for it. To fortify Pondicherry anew, and — above all — to conduct with the native princes the diplomatic dealings that we need, to have our rear protected..."

"Is it upon His Excellency's instructions that you tell us this, M. Paradis?" Miron questioned the bold speaker.

"No! But it is consistent with his intentions! And it is, moreover, consistent with his intentions that you, gentlemen, should now withdraw from here, seek your own homes and attend to your own affairs. Above all, I demand of you to inspire the population with courage, and to implant in the general imagination the conviction of our future victory!"

With these words, Paradis went past the table with a hasty step, bending his head exactly as he had seen Dupleix do half an hour before. Not one of the councillors responded to his greeting.

With a sigh of relief, Dupleix entered his study. Every possible reef had been avoided, the retreat achieved, the stroke successful. And no one, Dupleix assured himself contentedly, could make him the slightest reproach for it. He had handed on to the High Council all the information which the authorities in Paris had commissioned him to give and beyond that he had no duty, and therefore had failed in nothing. He did not need to, nor might he reveal his plans. It would be impossible to tell these tradesmen what threads he spun; they would never have understood the game. It was true that they had been in India as long as himself, or even longer but they had remained Europeans,

while the two decades of Indian life had turned him into an Oriental.

He would have preferred to cry his excitement aloud, to have hurled his contempt into the fat faces of these little shop-keepers of the High Council. It did not come easy to him to carry out consistently the role which he had imposed upon himself, against his own nature, and against the exciting outward circumstances. A struggle raged in him between muscles and nerves. But the muscles conquered, and suppressed by force every attempt at excitement, every attempt to let himself go.

For what had been built up, stone by stone, in twenty years of labour must not be set at stake in these decisive hours; what had been sowed two decades past and since cultivated, must not be destroyed just a short while before the harvest. In the first years of his residence in India, a plan had been formed in Dupleix. This plan had more and more taken possession of its creator, everything had been subordinated to it, for its sake, Joseph François had renounced all joys of the flesh, had resisted all the pleasures and temptations which the East offered in such rich measure – now, when the hour of ripeness drew near, he wished to reap the harvest, to seize with both hands, clasp to him what he had yearned for every day and every night of his life.

He threw himself into the armchair at his writing table, in order to repress the tension by force once more. Driving himself to be calm, he took up the pen, and turned it idly this way and that in his rough, bony hands. The movements of the muscles were recognisable on his broad fleshy face, as he contracted them powerfully, until he was at last master of himself. He leaned back in his chair, his small, piercing, black eyes fixed on the distance, bored their way into the blue damask tapestry, sprinkled over with the three lilies of the Bourbons, which covered the walls of his room.

Even the Hindu standing in front of him stared into an imaginary distance. He was called Ranga Pilai and bore the beautiful first name of Ananda which means "Bliss"; He was a banyan belonging to one of the lower branches of the third caste, and was one of the wealthiest merchants in the city. Madame Dupleix had met him shortly after her arrival in Pondicherry, had approved of him and found him suitable for her husband's purposes. Since then Monsieur Ananda had played a leading part in the Governor's life. The Hindu served Monsieur Dupleix simultaneously as banker, commissionaire for all kinds of business, interpreter, political agent and above all as - spy. He had recently become so indispensable that Madame Dupleix herself felt anxious. For some time she thought she had noticed that the Governor revealed a remarkable knowledge of certain delicate correspondence which she was carrying on in all the languages and orthographies of the country and which no one in her husband's circle could read except M. Ananda. And so a slight tension had arisen between the remarkable Madame Dupleix and the remarkable M. Ananda, a tension whose existence M. Dupleix by no means regretted since the use of two sources gave him the opportunity of comparing the one with the other.

M. Ananda was in the Governor's office this morning as usual. There he stood, white-skinned like a European, clean-shaven, wrapped in rustling silks and waiting for his master's orders, ready to make a careful note of each message.

In one hand he held a bundle of those membranes drawn from the leaves of the Long Palm, the so-called "olles", which the Indians use for writing. The bundle was tied together into a little book, with a thread. It rested in the Hindu's left hand while in the other he held the graving tool with which he wrote notes in this, his note-book.

Behind the two men reigned the inevitable dark-skinned, muslin-swathed, office servants making the fans go up and down in constant motion.

At last Ananda broke the silence. "Has Your Divinity's foresight been rewarded?" he asked. He introduced this form of address, "Votre Divinité", "Your Divinity", as often as possible. Not only did it please Dupleix who was very susceptible to such signs but he himself also derived an extraordinary satisfaction from the use of this high-sounding appellation. "Has Your Divinity succeeded in obtaining the thrice twenty-four hours necessary for the carrying out of His plan?"

The Governor shrugged his shoulders. Smiling he said lightly, "The High Council cannot do me any more harm. I have cheated it and the trick was not even a clever one."

"At any rate Your Divinity will now play the great game which has begun so auspiciously? And you will win it; it cannot be otherwise. And with it you will win many honours, titles and orders, much glory, money and land ... and perhaps more than that, for there is more to be won ... here in ... India."

"Silence, Ananda."

"The scheme is masterfully thought out, M. le Gouverneur ..."

"You praise yourself, Ananda, for it came from your brain ..."

"... but it was your resolution, your critical faculty, which took up the hesitating, stuttering words, twisted and turned them until they took shape and became what one must call a great game."

"The plan may be good but will it succeed?"

"Certainly! The English will withdraw from Pondicherry without firing a shot and you will conquer Madras without sacrificing a single soldier."

"And if Anwar ed Din Khan refuses my proposal?"

"Why should he refuse it? The plan would satisfy him even if you had not included forty thousand livres for him, a sum which is no mere trifle even for the Nabob of Carnatic..."

Dupleix was again gazing into the distance. At last he said, shaking his head, "Incredible that this Anwar ed Din Khan, this old warrior and soldier, this most dangerous of all dangerous nabobs, has not long since thrown us poor handful of Europeans back into the sea from which we emerged."

"Why should Anwar ed Din Khan dismiss from his country tenants who pay their annual tribute regularly, especially when, in addition, they happen to be particularly good at greasing palms?"

"All right, Ananda, I trust you."

"Your Divinity may do so. You may devote yourself to the preparations for your step-daughter's wedding. I will guard both roads with my men, the one to Madras as well as the one to Arcot. And I can assure you that as soon as the first Englishman appears on the road from Madras, Anwar ed Din's envoys will come galloping down and hold up the English. One word from Anwar ed Din and they will all return to their fortress; there they will disarm, relying on the Nabob's word. Then Your Excellence will surprise the city and take it without a stroke of the sword – but now let us talk about the wedding..."

Willingly Dupleix let his thoughts return from the distance to which they had flown, back to the cares of the day. "The marriage ceremony takes place at six o'clock," he began, "the priest has already received the necessary instructions. The banquet begins at seven, at nine the double sedan-chair will be ready for the bridal pair to go away. – Have the dishes been ordered from the cook?"

The Hindu nodded. Dupleix stretched out his hand to set the pearl-embroidered bell-pull in motion. A sign from Ananda prevented him.

"No need, Your Divinity, Madame Dupleix is not at home..."

The Governor eyed the Hindu in amazement. "... Not at home? A few hours before her daughter's wedding?"

"It will be something very important which Madame could not possibly put off..."

"On the wedding day?"

"Many ways lead to good fortune, Sahib, and to success," said Ananda with a smile, "Madame Dupleix has found one way and Ananda, my Sahib's obedient servant, has found another."

"My wife has found a way? What sort of way? Where will it lead her – and me?"

The Hindu maintained his fixed smile.

"Speak, man," Dupleix went on, "do you know where she is?"

"My words were meant metaphorically, Sahib. I do not know where Madame Dupleix is but I know that she will surprise my master with news which will be useful to him. So when Your Divinity has heard the advice of his wife, let Ananda know what he decides. Then Ananda will show him another, the second way."

"Then you mean that my wife's plan is no good?"

"I would never say such a thing, but only think! If Madame Dupleix suggests the way which I expect, it will be a good way and mine will not cross Madame's way but will pursue it further to a greater and wider end..."

Dupleix knew the merchant and his manner of expressing himself and he knew that from now on he would only receive evasive answers even to the most pressing questions in this connection. "That will do, Ananda, the riddle will solve itself." With this he broke off the discussion of the affair. "Are the invitations out, all thirty?"

"Yes! In addition to Your Divinity's friends, Madame's three sisters are coming with their husbands, the four children with their husbands, the newly-married couple, the

master's nephew, the two unmarried children, M. Paradis and the host, fifty-one persons in all. – Which wine shall I order for you, M. le Gouverneur?"

"Madeira . . . or sherry."

"If you command it, M. le Gouverneur . . ."

"Do you suggest a better one?"

"When the 'Duc de Bourbon' last entered Pondicherry harbour I bought a case of champagne from a lieutenant. The wily fellow had filled his whole cabin with it . . ."

"Make a note of champagne and madeira."

The merchant bowed. The Governor went on, "and no shortage of candles! That is specially important, Ananda. The stepdaughter of the Governor of Pondicherry only marries once. And real china and silver plates. Can you get hold of such things?"

Before the merchant could say, "Yes", Paradis burst into the room. The Governor's face brightened as he caught sight of the young man. The latter greeted him and gave an account of the sequel to the sitting, the councillors, their fright, their indignation, their threats and complaints.

"It didn't expect anything else," replied the Governor with a smile, "I cannot blame them if they are furious with me. They have a right to know my intentions but unfortunately I cannot lay my cards on the table – not yet!"

"Moreover the game which his Excellence is playing is a great game, the greatest in India," Ananda added to the Governor's words. He spoke softly, almost whispering – it sounded as though he were talking to himself. Paradis cast an enquiring glance at the Governor and opened his mouth but he swallowed the question which was already on the tip of his tongue.

When Ananda spoke of a great game one might be prepared for something extraordinary, for one of those oriental intrigues, (as amusing as they were dangerous,) in which Dupleix excelled, and Ananda and – above all – Jeanne Dupleix on whom the natives had conferred the

honorary title of 'Begum' as a token of admiration for her queenly superiority, beauty, subtlety and zeal. Jan-Begum, Princes Joan, as the Hindus called her, was the woman for whom Paradis lived, at whose feet he wanted to lay his successes and his fame. He knew that his love was hopeless, that Joseph Francois and Jeanne loved each other, more than that, that they had been bound together by friendship during an exceptionally long period of years. And yet he loved this woman and desired nothing more than one day to be able to reveal his love to her by some remarkable deed, by a victory which would shake the world or by his – death. Indeed, here in the land of fever, where everyone was permanently on familiar terms with Death, it was no great matter to die. Even in the past years of peace a few white men had died every day. But now there was war and the possibility of staking one's life completely . . . and in such a way that Jan-Begum would know that Paris Paradis had died for Jan-Begum . . .

Captivated by Ananda's hints and buried in his meditations and emotions, M. Paradis had lost all sense of his surroundings. At last he was startled out of his thoughts; a word from the Governor several times repeated, had penetrated to his consciousness.

"I have an important matter to discuss with you, M. Paradis. Will you sit down", Dupleix invited as the Hindu bowed and left the room.

The Governor's glance fell on the portfolio lying in front of him. He lifted up the heap of papers in his hands with a graceful, playful gesture, as though he wanted to test the weight of the documents. Then he let the letters fall with a shrug of his shoulders. "This impressive, fine-looking packet . . . this whole mail . . . admonitions and good advice as usual and nothing but words, words, words."

"As usual," Paradis agreed. "But what does it matter to us? We know what we have to do!" he cried aloud, thirsting for action.

"We know what we have to do . . ." echoed softly but with more conviction and determination from Dupleix's mouth. The papers rustled back into the portfolio.

"And no money, M. le Gouverneur?" asked the young man.

"Paltry sums, scarcely sufficient to pay the troops. For Pondicherry – nothing!" It sounded almost like a groan as Dupleix repeated the name again and again, "Pondicherry! Pondicherry! The houses, the streets, the fortifications! Each a problem in itself, gigantic, nerve-wracking. The rubbish of years is rotting in the moats – have I the money to clear them? In the streets you sink up to your ankles in dirt – have I the money to build roads? And the houses! The government buildings – a disgrace! The representative of His Most Christian Majesty in the continent of India resides in a half-finished building without sense or style. But never mind that!" The Governor took one of the letters out of the portfolio and pushed it across to Paradis. "Here, have a look at this letter, my friend, this little letter – typical Orry!"

Paradis took the letter and read, "We have foreseen war with England ever since the year 1741," wrote the Minister of Finance. "This war, M. le Gouverneur, was the reason why we forbade you to continue the work of construction."

Paradis raised his head and looked at the Governor. Monsieur Dupleix nodded. "Well, did I say too much? Is this letter a typical Orry? Oh, this nonsense! Oh, this stupidity from a Finance Minister. I am building for war and this donkey forbids me to build because of the war! And then listen to what he writes next, 'You have not sold enough and therefore have no credit at your disposal in Paris!' – and do you know what consequences the Minister attaches to these facts? – He wanted to have our bills protested, three miserable bills of 900,000, 2,600,000 and 800,000 livres! Thank God the attempt failed! M. Dupleix

paced up and down the room. When he had done a few turns he drew up in front of Paradis. It sounded almost sad as he continued to speak, I conquer an empire for these idiots and they protest bills worth four millions! And that with a capital of 160 million, not counting our land and buildings! It would be enough to make one weep if it wasn't so ridiculous!"

"And what is going to happen to those bills now?" asked Paradis, the expert banker in him coming to the fore.

"Nothing will happen! The King has advanced the money. His Most Christian Majesty has more sense than his entire Ministry and with all due respect we are fairly clear as to the extent of the royal intelligence. Really one has to deal with idiots – idiots and robbers. Anyone will lend money but only if he can get it back twofold the following day. Nobody realises that we are building for the future. Nobody will invest anything. Anyone who comes here is stranded in France and comes to seek a new existence. Look at our employees – poor devils, with scarcely enough to eat! If they don't do any work one can't even scold them! With such material I am supposed to conquer India, arm in arm with a Finance Minister who finds it impossible with a capital of 160 million, to raise a loan of fifteen or twenty million! And this gentleman accuses me of wasting money. Here read this letter through, these insidious, covert phrases ... here, here ..." he seized the pen and marked the places with thick strokes.

Astonished, Paradis read the strange words, "You alone must bear the blame, M. le Gouverneur, if you do not carry out my orders. At all events I do not authorise you ..."

"M. Orry is playing Pontius Pilate and washing his hands of it," cried Dupleix, beginning his irritable walk afresh. "Write down what I dictate to you Paradis. I'll give you the most important sentences word for word. When you have enumerated the whole succession of titles and orders in the address begin with the following words:

'I am commissioned to represent His Most Christian Majesty of France, Louis the Fifteenth, in India. I am commissioned to convey an idea of my master's power, of the glory and splendour which surrounds him, to the coloured natives. I must undertake this task at these courts, the residences of viceroys, governors, rajahs and nabobs, deputies and representatives of the throne of Delhi, each of which has at his disposal treasures and means of representation far exceeding those of my monarch. That is my situation in plain language. In this position, you, M. le Ministre de Finance, accuse me of extravagance because I wanted . . . *wanted* to finish the government buildings which my predecessor had begun to build! – and so should begin the letter which you, my dear Paradis, will have the goodness to draft."

Dupleix returned from his walk and took his seat behind the writing table again. "Let us proceed systematically!" he commanded, "and let us come to the next point in the order of the day – La Bourdonnais!"

At this word, a dark red spread over His Divinity's face, Dupleix clenched his fist and banged on the table. "They send me this Breton cur. He will have supreme command of the army, will bring warships and land troops . . ."

Now it was Paradis who was roused. "What, M. le Gouverneur, La Bourdonnais is receiving supreme command? This rough Pfälzer, this sea dog, this . . ."

"This cur, I repeat it, this cur La Bourdonnais," shouted Dupleix.

"Why not you yourself, M. le Gouverneur?"

"What a question! Naturally he will be under me for land operations. And I won't give him a chance to do any harm – I hate him and with reason! I have an old score to settle with him when the opportunity arises. And I'll pay that score! But one should never be in a hurry to pay old bills. Such things require time and opportunity. Well the opportunity may occur. First of all we must

write to him. Please draft a letter in which I wish him luck in his work and offer him cordial friendship. Use more or less the words that we two, he and I, ought, as the highest commanders, to be on the best of terms for the sake of the common good and our country. I, for my part, therefore promise him that I shall do everything in my power to show him my friendship and beg him to offer me his ... and so on. At the same time write to Orry. I'll dictate:

"The appointment of La Bourdonnais surprised me as it surprised the whole of India. May God grant that you will not one day regret this decision..."

That these two letters grossly contradicted one another, to put it mildly; that their direct succession constituted an open perfidy, a human betrayal, an abuse of the most noble words and ideals held sacred by human beings whatever the colour of their skin – that never occurred to Governor Dupleix or to his collaborator, Paradis. They had both been in India too long already, still to be susceptible to moral considerations of this kind. Such things were smilingly called "little jokes" or "little games" as opposed to the 'great jokes or games' in which millions of pounds sterling or at least thousands of human lives were at stake. But since this great game was played annually in several rounds people had grown used to the accompanying circumstances.

Satisfied, M. Dupleix continued the conversation. "And now for the next point..." he began and a certain expression of solemnity spread over his face. He stood up, walked round the table, went to the young man, laid his hands on his shoulders and addressed him as follows, "First of all I assign to you, my dear Paradis, supreme command of all French troops in the region of the Coromandel coast while at the same time I promote you to the rank of captain. You have shown your adaptability to military tasks in the restoration of the Pondicherry citadel. I beg you to begin the improvement of the Pondicherry city

fortifications at once. So far as the fresh levying and training of troops is concerned you will have professional officers at your disposal. From tomorrow your place as my private secretary will be taken by me eldest step-son, Jacques Vincens. Will you please go over the subjects of today's conversation with M. Vincens. From tomorrow on you will simply be Captain Paradis . . ."

Red in the face, Paradis stared at the Governor and stammered a few words of thanks. At last he saw himself at the goal. This glorious promotion would give him the desired opportunity of revealing his sentiments towards Jan-Begum.

Smiling and slightly moved, Dupleix looked up at the young man. He held out his hand to him and Paradis drew it gratefully to his heart. The two threw their arms round one another.

"My dear Paradis, you are our guest at today's wedding. If you can possibly get hold of an outfit in a few hours, you can take this opportunity of presenting yourself to Madame Dupleix in your uniform. I know how much you respect Madame . . ."

"My life is at Madame's service," cried the young man enthusiastically. Then he again bowed low over Dupleix's hand to hide his pleasure. It was some time before he was able to think and speak.

"But shall I not meet with opposition from the old professional officers, from Captain Combault d'Auteuil and M. de Bury?" he stammered at last.

"No need to worry, my dear Captain. Both gentlemen have enough to do. De Bury will command and thoroughly drill the volunteer corps we shall form and I have a special task for d'Auteuil. Listen to me, Captain - I am, as you know, no soldier. But I have had plenty of opportunity of learning what is meant by military action. An open mind learns such things quickly. At any rate I have been thinking over how we can look after ourselves.

It is not done with the fortifications alone, we need troops, masses of men, armies. The few hundred or at best thousand men who have been gleaned from the penitentiaries and brothels of France and transported here will form the nucleus of our troops. But we could do something more. Why, I ask, do we not summon the native Indians to join the ranks of our armies? I have studied the Indian soldiers, especially those who belong to fighting castes, for many years. Excellent human material. I know there will be a thousand difficulties, the castes must be respected, the laws about washing, clothing, food . . . but these difficulties will not be insuperable . . .”

Paris Paradis listened to his master's speech in excitement. “I admire Your Excellency” he cried loud and exuberantly. “This idea will decide the fate of India! It could only spring from such a brain as yours, crammed with lofty schemes. How grateful I am for the destiny which led me to you, M. le Gouverneur . . .”

Dupleix accepted his adherent's praise with a smile. He knew this youthful enthusiasm, had himself been filled with such sentiments when at seventeen he set out to see the wide world and to conquer it. “Please God you are right, my dear Paradis, in saying that the raising of native troops will be able to decide the fate of India. I thought that the troops of armed coolies who guard our ships in the harbour might form the nucleus of the new army. Indeed I have already thought of a name for our future coloured soldiers. They shall be called ‘sepoys’. The guardians of our ships are called this in the native tongue. It is a word which, as Ananda explained to me, is derived from the Persian ‘Sipahi’ meaning ‘soldier’. Trained as field soldiers and divided into companies, these men could be used in open battle just as they defend our ships with their weapons in their hands. Thus we shall have a big advantage over the English when it comes to the first serious conflict, which will only happen some years hence

according to my reckoning. – Discuss the details, recruiting accommodation and maintenance, with Ananda. He must translate the regulations, the recruiting forms and the applications into Tamul. We must train and accommodate two or three thousand men altogether. Draw the officers from the best families of the fighting castes. Then d'Auteuil shall have absolute command over these troops.”

With that the discussion ended. Filled with happiness, M. Paradis left his master with repeated expressions of thanks.

The Governor watched him departing, contentedly. Ananda, Paradis, d'Auteuil – those were the men with whom he wished to build his Indian empire. The Hindu bound to him by money, the youth by the bond of his love for Madame and by trust and kindness, d'Auteuil by the tie of blood. The lady certainly played the most prominent part in the game, Jeanne, this incomparable woman.

Radiant with happiness, Dupleix looked up at the picture which – opposite the portrait of King Louis – decorated the wall of his study and showed Madame in European evening dress. It dated from the time when Madame, scarcely thirteen years old, had first married. And Dupleix repeatedly assured himself, with the amazement with which one beholds a miracle, that Madame had scarcely altered in the twenty years which had since elapsed. He looked up at the picture for a long time as though he could not impress these features, which he yet knew so well, sufficiently upon his mind. At last he took his eyes away and rang the bell.

“Periwig, light blue velvet coat, dove-grey waistcoat, white silk breeches, white silk stockings, buckle shoes, dress sword and all orders,” he instructed the secretary who came in. “Also the hairdresser.”

“M. Coquin is busy with Madame,” replied the secretary.

"My wife is back then?"

"Yes, M. le Gouverneur. Madame's litter arrived a few minutes ago. Madame rushed into her room, summoning her maids and the hairdresser." The secretary advanced a step nearer and added in a subdued tone, "Madame was wearing Indian clothes, wide trousers, a short jacket, hat and - veil!"

But the expected effect was not produced. The Governor let his pen travel indifferently over the dispatches, underlining a word here, making a note in the margin there.

The secretary hurriedly disappeared.

A few minutes later half a dozen bare-footed Indian servants burst into the room, cupboard doors flew open, clothes, wigs, underclothes spread all over the room.

For half an hour Joseph François Dupleix was nothing more than a puppet in the hands of his Indian servants.

"I feel really miserable! To think that I am six hundred miles away from France, that I am without help and consolation . . .", the seventeen-year-old Joseph Francois had written in despair to his father, M. Francois Dupleix, 'Fermier de la ferme du tabac pour en rendre compte à la Compagnie des Indes', the royal director of the French tobacco monopoly. He had fallen sick on the long journey to India, which had lasted nearly a year and a half, had borrowed four hundred pagodas from a fellow traveller, did not know how to pay it back and appealed for parental assistance which was refused.

Then later, in spite of his youth, he became president of the High Council of Pondicherry when scarcely twenty-five years old. A year after this he was appointed 'commis-saire ordonnateur des guerres' and was thereby put in charge of the most important administrative department, that of defence. Already in the same year he was entrusted with

the general correspondence and all the High Council's dispatches were composed by him no matter to whom they were addressed. Since he had to work with subordinates who were considerably senior to him in age and length of service many intrigues arose and many hours in the life of young Joseph François were filled with care and with that tormenting homesickness which casts such a gloom over the souls of young Indian colonists.

In those days he came to know Jacques Vincens, a small merchant and a humble man who nevertheless guarded a special treasure – Jeanne, his wife, the daughter of M. Jacques Théodore Albert and the latter's wife Elisabeth Rose de Castro, that very Jeanne who was later to be called Jan-Begum, Princess Joan, the incarnation of India and its greatest wonder. This acquaintance with Jeanne Vincens affected the destiny of M. Dupleix and through him, that of France.

It may have begun with the fact that Jeanne Vincens consoled and cheered the harrassed and homesick Joseph François, since her happy nature, her great sense of humour and her ready wit, had the power of exercising a far-reaching influence on the moods, conduct and actions of her fellowmen.

When Jeanne Albert married Jacques Vincens, she was thirteen years old. The marriage was an exceptionally happy one. Then, when M. Dupleix appeared, a close friendship soon sprang up between the young married couple and the slightly older Dupleix, and Joseph François took good care not to disturb the happiness of this marriage although he fell in love with Jeanne at the very first moment.

In spite of Dupleix' great success things often went wrong for the three friends. They were each interested in the most diverse undertakings. There were false speculations, lost cargoes, highway attacks on land transport and consequently financial difficulties and cares of all kinds.

But they were young and bore joy and sorrow together. Dupleix came daily to the Vincens' house, shook off his cares and received comfort and consolation just as he, for his part, did his best to help his friends in word and deed. Jeanne's sisters were like his own sisters. But whenever he wondered whether it would not be a good idea to marry one of them he dismissed the thought again. For him, Jeanne came before everything else, he worshipped her as a saint, he idolized her, he prayed to her.

At that time it happened that after long deliberations with Jeanne he formed an idea which was to lead to a new era for India and her trade. Whether this idea originated in his brain or in Jeanne's cannot be established and nobody enquired. So it was then; so it remains for the future. But this much is certain, that the great majority of Dupleix' countless financial and political undertakings would have failed had not Jeanne thrown in her cleverness and her thorough knowledge of the country thereby averting disaster. First of all it was a question of re-organising Indian commerce. Dupleix had noticed what an extraordinary quantity of Indian wares of all kinds, especially valuable manufactured goods, were offered for sale on the inland market. He realised that a vigorous land and coastal trade could be carried on with this. Hitherto nobody had dreamed of that. Trade activity only extended as far as the purchase and transport to Europe, of spices, especially pepper – products which played a special part in world trade at this time. For the possibility of winter feeding was still unknown to farmers throughout the world so that all the cattle had to be slaughtered and cured at Martinmas. Consequently one was compelled to eat dried meat most of the year and used a great many spices to make this meat palatable. Thus the whole Indian trade had originally sprung up, and thus it had been carried on for hundreds of years – until M. Dupleix, still under thirty, appeared in Pondicherry,

discovered and organised the coastal trade and brought prosperity to the town in a few years.

No wonder he was very much sought after in all India. In the tenth year of his operations for Pondicherry the settlement of Chandernagore in Bengal, succeeded in winning M. Dupleix for itself by offering him the post of governor. Now, fired and supported by the possibility of being able to exercise sovereign power and to act on his own responsibility, the youthful governor performed that astonishing miracle which is attested most conspicuously by the external construction of the town. It goes without saying that a clear thinker did not forget his own pocket. Within a few years, seventy ships were sailing on all seas on behalf of the millionaire Dupleix and trading as far as China and Persia.

Jeanne could again claim the chief share in this success. She had taught Joseph François one thing which was hitherto absolutely unknown in the colonies, namely kindness and good faith towards the natives, especially towards the Hindu merchants. This conduct not only brought M. Dupleix the reputation of being a fine character and a particularly trustworthy contracting party, it also brought him many millions in ready cash.

Here in Chandernagore whither Jacques and Jeanne had followed their friend Dupleix, Jacques Vincens succumbed to the terrible strain of tropical life. It stands to reason that Dupleix should have asked for Jeanne's hand a year after the death of his friend and it stands equally to reason that she should have granted him this hand.

Immediately following the wedding came the return to Pondicherry after ten years absence. This happened at the time when the great crisis which befell free and therefore sovereign India was apparent to the far-seeing and penetrating eyes of the Governor and his wife. From now on Jan-Begum devoted all her cleverness and charm, her wit and special knowledge, above all her invincible

cheerfulness which was so satisfactorily combined with a profound and genuine seriousness, to her new husband's great schemes which became more and more ambitious. There sprang up between Joseph François and Jeanne that political co-operation which was to prove so important in the future.

Of the eleven children which Jeanne had presented to her first husband and of whom five boys and four girls were still living, she only brought the three youngest with her when she re-married, since, with Dupleix' help, she had already married off the elder ones during her husband's life-time.

Marie Rose, the third youngest child, was sixteen years old at this time. She it was whom the step-father married to Don Pedro Coyle de Barneval in Madras. Marie Rose had inherited her mother's cleverness and unerring instinct and Dupleix hoped for much from this outpost in the enemy camp.

The youngest, christened Marie Françoise Xavier, was eight at the time of the return to Pondicherry. She was called Chonchon and was her step-father's special favourite.

Of Madame's sisters, Marie-Madeleine, the eldest, was married to the Captain of dragoons, Combault d'Auteuil, from whose future Dupleix expected much. The other two sisters had married merchants, the one M. Arboulain, the other M. Saint-Paul through which brother-in-law Dupleix secured his position in the Company still more firmly.

The fact that this wedding attracted gossip, which thrives as well under the tropical sun of India as under the sun of King Louis, disturbed neither the Governor nor his wife. Slandrous tongues maintained that Joseph François Dupleix had only married Jeanne Vincens because she brought him three sisters and nine children as a dowry and had therefore provided the possibility of founding a widespread power. When the question arose Dupleix did not deny that he valued highly and received gratefully

the increase in family connections which his marriage afforded him. Power, that was something which lay in the blood of a man like Dupleix. And twelve close relations who had since increased to twenty by marriage – that meant more than capital in India at this time, that could already be called a small European Power.

But the noblest jewel and the most important capital – and moreover one which was unique in the whole of India – was still Jan-Begum herself. First, there was the wonder of her beauty. In spite of her thirty-three years – which had been reduced to thirty-one on her second marriage certificate – in spite of her eleven children, in spite of her half Indian descent and her life in the youth-destroying tropics she had kept her beauty and the appearance of a young girl.

If one saw Jeanne Dupleix in European state dress, the towering, white wig laden with stuffed birds, artificial flowers and silk bows of all colours on the little head, the wide, low cut of her brocade dress trimmed with lace – if one saw her thus, one could not guess that beneath the layer of white and red cosmetics and beneath the clouds of powder covering wig and face, lay a skin which gleamed as darkly bronzed as that of any other Indian woman. Then again, if one met her in Indian dress, in the long wide trousers, the short, gold-embroidered jacket, her breasts bare of the white muslin shawl – then one could not help but take her for a pure Indian. The great, almond-shaped, glowing eyes, the delicate bluish haze which lay over the eyeballs, revealed the fact that Jeanne's cradle had stood on the Coromandel coast.

But not only was Madame Dupleix one of the most beautiful women in India, not only was she as much Portugese as Indian and twice French by marriage – she was above all a woman of political instinct. All the wiles of the east seemed to be combined in her. Not content with that she had also had the unusual opportunity of

making use of this cunning, moreover she knew India, gigantic, mysterious, elusive, dark India, better than anyone else as a result of her racial connection with white and brown. This knowledge came from her grandmother de Castro, (the wife of the noble M. de Castro,) who was by birth a mere pariah girl.

In a country in which a good dozen languages were spoken, from the ancient Sanscrit muttered by the priests and philosophers to the high-toned Tamul and the low Malabarish, not forgetting Persian and Arabian – in a country in which Turkish, Persian, Afghan and Mongolian rulers and priests had left behind their indelible traces – in a country in which a dozen religions and a widespread, complicated caste system and a wealth of tradition determined the thoughts and actions of men – in such a country, only one who spoke a good dozen of these languages and who had thoroughly mastered the interminable multiplicity of these religions, manners and customs could really get to the bottom of the thing and understand it. Especially the pious! The Indian finds in his religion what love of the fatherland and feeling for home means to the European. Patriotism and national sentiment are strange to him. The Moslem sees a brother in the Moslem regardless of the fact that one was born at the mouth of the Danube and the other at the mouth of the Ganges, that the one speaks Turkish, the other Afghan. Two people, born and bred in the same village, who spend their lives together, remain strangers till death if they pray to different gods. The harsh and pitiless dictates of the caste system belong to the sphere of religious domination which subjects the feelings, thoughts and body of the Indian. Its laws and precepts, organisation and customs can only be learnt in all their unending variety by years of study. But in order to get to know the way these people think and to be able to anticipate what they will do in given circumstances one must be born in India.

Jeanne Albert had imbibed the knowledge of all these things and the sense of their operation in details with her mother's milk. But her knowledge did not end with the domestic and religious life of the great mass of India, the lower and middle classes — it also extended to the influential princely courts of east and southern India with their constitutions and conditions. And that meant a great deal! For apart from the ruling prince, each of these courts had half a dozen pretenders to the crown, mostly descendents of former rulers who had been deposed by the reigning prince or his predecessors. Thus it was a case of distinguishing between dozens of great grandfathers, grandfathers, uncles, nephews and sons-in-law who were nearly all called Mohammed or Mirza into the bargain. Moreover it not only meant knowing this geneology in detail, one also had to know how the murder took place in the beginning, who had acted as accomplices, what acts of revenge were to be expected and which murders had already been expiated and forgiven by money or other means — and what further murders, settlements and atonements would be made from day to day.

Hence many great games were played in which the crowns of Bengal, Bahir, Orissa, the Deccan and the Carnatic — if not the peacock throne of Delhi itself — were at stake. And it was inevitable that such an ambitious and successful man as Dupleix should feel a fierce desire to join in this game, to win the tricks and to play the trump cards. Jan-Begum gave him the opportunity of joining in the game as a fully qualified player for he need fear no language deficiency, no error in the interpretation of a word or deed. So he became an equal partner, who was able to play with the Indians in the Indian way. Jeanne Dupleix had anticipated all the great skill, all the tricks of black magic whose superb mastery was later to render the English secret service so famous throughout the world and so feared in India.

When the Anglo-French war broke out in 1744, twenty years had passed since Joseph François Dupleix had first set foot on the golden sands of the Coromandel coast.

Hand in hand with his Jan-Begum he could look forward with confidence to the third decade.

"You might be taken for the bride, Madame," said M. Joseph François Dupleix as he entered his wife's dressing room. His face was glowing with admiration for this woman and with the happiness of possessing her.

"And yet I am only the bride's mother," replied Jeanne modestly and smiled her bewitching smile.

She stood before her mirror. Half a dozen Indian maids were busy putting the last trivial yet effective touches to her state dress and coiffure, those touches which make such a difference to the general appearance. With a hurried movement Madame drove her maids from the room and the lovers fell into one another's arms without in any way touching their faces so that even the delicate bloom of the work of art which Madame had made of herself was unharmed.

Then Dupleix offered his hand to his wife to lead her into the salon. But at the very first step he stopped. "Your dressing room is filled with wonderful perfumes, Madame, which I have never smelt before," said the Governor, sniffing the air.

"Nor could you ever have smelt this delicious scent before, my lord, for it is the perfume of an Indo-Arabian harem which I have brought back on my clothes. Do you see my Indian attire lying on the stool over there? Those sweet scents emanate from them. I brought them back from my excursion today, a visit about whose cause and effect I will tell you in full detail when we are alone tonight. For the moment will you please answer one question, my dear Joseph François: Whom are they sending you from France as commander-in-chief?"

Jeanne saw how her husband's features darkened. After a pause Dupleix answered softly, "... La Bourdonnais", and again after a pause he added, "... always La Bourdonnais, everywhere La Bourdonnais! Oh, how I hate him, this cur, this swashbuckler and admiral who should have been made a ships carpenter!"

"Don't take it to heart, my friend. We shall get rid of this opponent as well. Seen in the light this giant is a dwarf and I may add that I have seen bigger dwarves."

The Governor's face brightened. "You're right as usual Jeanne," he said warmly and affectionately, "seen in the light he is nothing but a very small giant..."

"And are we not playing quite a different game, Joseph François, a game which he neither can nor will detect and which only concerns us who have become Indians? I have re-shuffled the cards in this game today and you will enjoy the result. Can you guess where I spent the time between morning and afternoon? You can't guess! I was in Chanda Sahib's harem..."

"Where were you? What do you want from Chanda Sahib's wife?"

"That is a long story. You carry on your negotiations with Anwar ed Din Khan and leave Chanda Sahib and his favourite wife to me. One game will supplement the other and I hope that mine will take the place of yours. But let us hurry, the litters are waiting to take us to the church."

Chanda Sahib! A wreath of stories was encircled round the head of this man, stories which might have belonged to the fairy tales of 'the Thousand and One Nights' had they not one and all had such bloody endings.

Thirty years before, Aurang Seb, the last of the great Grand Moguls closed his eyes and the peacock throne was taken by lesser men who were incapable of ruling the Indian Empire with wisdom and might. Kuli Khan-Nadir,

the King of Persia had attacked the country exactly five years previously and had instituted that dreadful massacre of Delhi in which blood flowed in streams through the streets of the capital, before he returned the crown to the weak Mohammed Shah, that caricature of a Grand Mogul who was asking for it on bended knee. Since then India had deteriorated rapidly. The subadars and viceroys henceforward carried on their government without consulting the Imperial will. But in the various districts they established district lords, called 'nabobs', as they pleased, and so far even these nabobs preserved their independence and consulted neither the Grand Mogul nor his viceroys. And so the nabobs, who had hitherto received their honours from the power of the Grand Mogul and of his viceroys and had only worn their crowns set with diamonds as a feof now became tryants in their own kingdoms.

One of the most powerful viceroys was the subadar, Nizam-al-Mulk; he governed the kingdom of the Deccan which included practically the whole of southern India.

The Carnatic, one of the largest and finest provinces whose capital was Arcot, belonged to the Deccan. Here Anwar ed Din Khan sat on the throne as Nabob.

The two settlements of Pondicherry and Madras were dependent on the Nabob, Anwar ed Din Khan. But they were legally pieces of land which the Nabob of the Carnatic had leased to the French and English East India Companies respectively in return for annual payment.

The powerful subadar, Nizam-al-Mulk and his Nabob, Anwar ed Din Khan had already been bound together in close friendship through their fathers. Both were friendly towards England and stuck to one another through thick and thin. Nizam-al-Mulk had actually set his friend, Anwar ed Din Khan on the throne of the Carnatic in the place of the old ruling dynasty of the Sadatullas.

But Chanda Sahib was descended from this old legitimate dynasty of the Sadatullas of the Carnatic.

Some years before this Chanda Sahib had attacked Trichinopoly ostensibly to collect taxes which were due. But the entry of his soldiers into the city was resisted and it was so well fortified that he had no hope of capturing it.

In Trichinopoly there ruled a queen, the widow of the deceased Rajah, that is Viceroy, a coquettish, amorous woman. Chanda Sahib entered the city to visit her. Since he only brought a small following with him he was admitted into the Queen's palace. With every sign of reverence and devotion the Nabob entered the 'darbar', the Queen's audience chamber. He noticed how the amorous woman cast greedy glances at him, she who had no man about her of equal rank whom she could take as her husband. Cunningly he courted the favour of the widow, who soon fell in love with him and was willing to please him. So they lived for a time as lovers in spite of the fact that Chanda's army was still encamped outside the gates of the city. One day Chanda begged the Queen to let his soldiers into the city. But she – distrustful in spite of all love – demanded that he should first swear on the Koran that he bore her no ill will. The wily man wrapped a brick in a silken cloth embroidered with holy signs and swore on the pretended Koran thus robbing the oath of its value. Scarcely had the gates opened before the Nabob overwhelmed the garrison and threw the enamoured Queen into prison where she shortly died of grief at the man's baseness. Thus Chanda Sahib became ruler and Nabob of Trichinopoly.

Just as Chanda Sahib conquered Trichinopoly by a trick so he lost it by a trick. It was his own kinsmen who roused the Mahrattas, the wildest and most dangerous of Indian fighting tribes, against him. When Chanda Sahib heard of the approach of the enemy he prepared the city for defence and bought up all the corn from the vicinity and brought it into the city.

The Mahrattas, seeing that the siege would last for years pretended to withdraw completely from the fortress and waited in the neighbourhood to see what Chanda would do. Their ruse succeeded. Not suspecting anything, Chanda sold the corn which he did not think he would need any more. Scarcely had the waggons left the town when the Mahrattas advanced at night by forced marches and surrounded it. Chanda defended himself heroically for three months then he had to surrender the city overcome with hunger. He was taken to Satarah as a prisoner.

He had already taken his wife and son to Pondicherry when he set out to conquer Trichinopoly knowing that they were safest under the protection of the French guns.

He himself remained a prisoner in the country of the Mahrattas. Every one of his relations were driven from the throne and Anwar ed Din Khan was raised to the position of Nabob of the Carnatic. Dupleix entered into negotiations with the latter as soon as he became Governor of Pondicherry.

As the organ played in the old Jesuit church of Pondicherry and the priest united the hands of the bridal pair, Dupleix pondered over his wife's plans.

Madame had visited Chanda's wife. The cunning, violent warrior himself sat imprisoned far away. Chanda was like a chessman which, driven into a corner of the board and hemmed in by the other men, is condemned to inactivity and takes no part in the game. Therefore if Madame had been to Chanda's wife she must be contemplating bringing the warrior back into play. The more Dupleix thought about this possibility the more it appealed to him. Chanda Sahib was the very man who, were he once set free, must be the deciding figure in the further course of the game. The fact that Madame took this step

at the moment when the war with England began, indicated that she wanted to bring Chanda into the field against England.

Meditating further Dupleix returned to his opponent's point of view. He had held out silver bait for Anwar ed Din Khan and hoped he had got a bite and that the Nabob would accept his proposal. If he did so the English would be prevented from entering the Nabob's domain in order to attack the French.

Being English they would obey the Nabob's order and finally, without doubt, disarm. For M. Dupleix it went without saying that he would surprise the unarmed English and destroy them. He had lived more than a thousand and one nights in India and the trains of thought and methods of Chanda Sahib and his friends and enemies had long since sunk into his blood and nerves.

So far the position of the game was clear to Dupleix. But – what could and would follow the surprise of the English? That was the question! At the bottom of his heart Anwar ed Din Khan was friendly towards England. It was quite possible that he would take the stroke amiss, avenge the English and attack Pondicherry. And the giant army of the Nabob who was himself a great commander was not to be laughed at.

No sooner had M. Dupleix reached this thought than he suddenly grasped the combination which Madame had in mind. By God and all the saints, if he had not just happened to be in church he would have taken Madame in his arms and pressed her to his heart in admiration and gratitude! But as it was he could only seize her little hand and draw it furtively to his lips. Madame glanced at her husband and knew at once what was passing in his mind. Happy and contented at being understood he smiled in front of him.

So that was it! That was the role which Chanda Sahib was to play. If the Chanda Sahib lion could be

released from his bondage and encouraged to declare war on Anwar ed Din Khan then there would be time to carry the English booty into safety and digest it in peace.

Joseph François drove the finger nails into his flesh to prevent himself from crying out with delight at this brilliant plan. Now he also understood why Madame had made such pressing inquiries about the commander-in-chief. That would have been so nice for La Bourdonnais! That would have been an easy way to glory! M. Dupleix bribes the Nabob who proclaims peace within his domain, the English lull themselves into security – and M. La Bourdonnais wins an easy victory over the carefree enemy and reaps the harvest of M. Dupleix' clever sowing! That must not happen! The hated La Bourdonnais seemed even more hateful to M. Dupleix at this moment! Already his thoughts wanted to twine themselves like creeping plants round M. La Bourdonnais, when it occurred to him that Madame had already predicted counter measures. Incomparable woman! So she had already busied herself with this question! For the second time Dupleix drew his wife's hand to his lips and for the second time he knew by the glance which answered him that he had been understood.

The government buildings which had been begun by M. Dumas and continued by M. Dupleix formed a very diminutive reproduction of the splendid palace which the royal overlord inhabited in Versailles. But it was still more inferior to the splendid palaces in which the native Indian princes resided.

This far too primitive habitation had been a sore point with M. Dupleix ever since the first day he entered Pondicherry. It is true that he had introduced silken hangings and splendid furniture, whatever he could lay hands upon, but at heart he was ashamed of his dwelling.

His enemies accused M. Dupleix of vanity; his many relations and his few friends denied this. He himself counted among the knowledge which he had gained from experience, the opinion that in this world, such as it is, the appearance of might comes to almost the same thing as might itself. Thus he had decorated this house as splendidly as was possible at such a distance from France.

As the ladies and gentlemen went to their seats and sat down, bowing and courtseying politely to one another, a small orchestra of Moorish musicians began to chant one of the old Arabian love songs. A young man in Persian costume sprang on the dais and began to sing, accompanying himself on the lute, while the musicians went over to a murmuring, harmonising melody. In his deep but clear tenor the singer warbled his song through the room. The bare-footed servants hurried silently across the floor carrying the costly china dishes with the entrée. The guests continued their conversation. Not one of them understood the words of the song. Only Jeanne, Princess Joan, and Marie Rose, the bride, smiled at one another as the first words reached their ears, nodded and both realised with surprise that the tears were coming to their eyes. Pedro, the young bridegroom, asked Marie Rose what the song meant. The young wife raised her lips to her husband's ear and murmured the verses to him as fast as she could translate them into French.

Love, those eyes like the narcissus
And the teeth in pearly rows
Where a smile is sweetly playing
Deep affliction cause, and woes.
Only one desire I utter.
You must grant this wish of mine:
Mix the drink for me and singing,
Hand me this, the fiery wine.

Willingly I grant your wishes.
I do all that you command;
Should I lovingly embrace you
Or far off in penance stand.
My heart's lodestone, gleaming brightly,
I know but one law – 'tis thine.
Mix the drink for me and singing,
Hand me this, the fiery wine.

Oh, gazelle, thou art my prayer,
Of my life the sweeter part.
Let the black eyes threaten, sending
Cruel dart on cruel dart.
He who dies of love is blessed –
Hasten Death, me to entwine,
Mix the drink for me and singing,
Hand me this, the fiery wine.

M. Dupleix, the most fortunate of European Indians, sat among his guests at the long table, ate his roast meat, chatted to his neighbour and whenever he could, glanced radiantly across at Madame Jeanne. And whenever he looked at Jean-Begum he repeated to himself that he had every cause to be thoroughly satisfied with his position, his power and his possessions. And all the more so since he was involved in schemes and affairs which must bring a substantial increase to his fortune! The fulfilment of his cherished hopes was guaranteed by his best ally, Jan-Begum.

Course followed course. The whole array of delicacies which India has to offer were provided.

At last the guests could dip their spoons into the thick syrup and pick out the preserved fruits which end an Indian meal.

And so eight o'clock came. Madame rose from the table; the servants hastened to push back the chairs; the happy course of the festivity seemed assured when a dis-

cord was unexpectedly introduced into the general enjoyment.

Councillor Miron suddenly entered the hall from the direction of the garden, went up to Dupleix without taking the slightest notice of the guests and cried, "The English are coming!"

The laughter died on the faces of the guests. Compliments which were already hovering on the lips, remained unspoken, a deep silence spread over the room. In the middle of the long side of the table M. Dupleix stood opposite to M. Miron. So deep was the silence that the sound of the sea could be heard, even in the room.

"How dare you enter unannounced, M. Miron?". M. Dupleix said calmly.

"Have you not understood me, M. le Gouverneur? Is this a time to talk about formalities? — As it is I had to take the way through the garden because I was refused admission at the front door. And I am not ashamed of having come this way. It is not a case of you or me — it is a case of France!"

"I represent France! The care of Pondicherry is my business! I bear the responsibility and I beg you to leave this room at once!" And turning to his guests, M. Dupleix continued, "On with the feast! Ladies and gentlemen, I must apologise for this disturbance, the"

But the Governor was interrupted. Cries sounded from the street, shots filled the air, mingled with the noise of trampling hooves.

Panic seized the guests, here one of the ladies uttered a scream, there one of the men fled to the door, a stool fell down with a crash, the servants dropped the fans.

"Order!" cried M. Dupleix, "Your security, ladies and gentlemen, lies in my hands and I have taken precautions to ensure that nothing will happen to the city of Pondicherry or its inhabitants"

"So you want to surrender the city?" cried Miron, disconcerted.

"You have misunderstood me, my dear sir", replied M. Dupleix calmly. "Only listen while we quarrel the noise dies away ... Hearken to the evening with me. What do you perceive? Nothing but the sound of the sea singing its ancient song on the yellow shore of Pondicherry"

"You are getting poetical, M. le Gouverneur", murmured M. Miron and sank helplessly into a chair. "I fear you have lost your reason."

Ignoring the Councillor's complaint, Dupleix continued, "But I hear something else, hear the trampling of the approaching hooves of messengers bringing you the solution to the riddle, my dear ladies and gentlemen ..."

And indeed, at the same moment, a camel rider came to a halt in front of the government buildings, jumped down and rushed into the room. It was an Indian whom Dupleix recognised as one of Ananda's grooms. The man stopped in front of the Governor, greeted him, made the sign and announced; -

"My lord Ranga Pilai sends word to Your Excellence that Anwar ed Din's envoys have held up the English army. They spoke to the English before the gates of the city and informed them of the will of the great Nabob. The shots which you heard were fired by a few over-hasty pickets who have long since been reduced to silence ... The English have withdrawn and made a halt. After a short rest they will begin the retreat."

Jan-Begum translated every sentence from Malabarish into French so that the guests understood the cheering message at once.

Now the congratulations of the ladies and gentlemen were joined by the cheers of the populace who, informed of the events at the same time, surged in to express their thanks to the Governor.

While M. Miron slipped away unnoticed the Governor stepped out of the house, stood between the pillars of the porch amid the cheers and addressed the townspeople.

When Dupleix re-entered the circle of his own people a few minutes later, he was again assailed by congratulations.

"Three cheers for the upholder of peace!" cried one of the brothers-in-law. But before the cheer could be repeated, Dupleix signed to them to stop.

"You are mistaken, my dear friends, I am not an upholder of peace. The war goes on! We are mobilising! Captain d'Auteuil, Captain Paradis . . ." The two gentlemen saluted . . . "Tomorrow morning a parade of our troops in front of the city. The day after tomorrow, fresh recruiting! I have made peace because I need time for war. Long live the war!"

Marie Rose, the bride, stood in Jan-Begum's little closet taking off her European dress. The brocade farthingale and its wired frame, the bodice supported with fishbones, the shoes and stockings, the wig and all the adornments, all these would be laid aside one after the other and packed in cases to be loaded on the ox-carts which were to take the young wife's possessions to Madras.

Jan-Begum sat on the sofa and watched her daughter's activity, taking pleasure in the fine growth, the regularity of the limbs, the harmony of the movements. Her glances caressed the child's body and her heart was overflowing with desires and blessings. Full of maternal pride she observed that the girl was scarcely less beautiful than the fairest maiden in the land. But the mother knew for certain that Marie Rose was cleverer than the cleverest.

"Hurry up, you girls", she called to the servants in the Malabarish language and added in the native style, "already the drums are beating for the start and the ravens are croaking for the departure."

Hastily the servants helped Marie Rose into the silken

trousers, girded her with the muslin shawl which covers the upper part of the body and wound the veiled turban round her head.

Then they glided swiftly away, driven out by Jan-Begum.

Mother and daughter curled up close together on the sofa. "This is the parting kiss", Jan-Begum began, "the marriage kiss follows it. When shall we exchange the kiss which reunites us?"

"The palankeen musicians are playing already", the girl replied. She did not say it in an impatient tone, she only sought to find expression for the mood of the moment.

Jan-Begum drew a few leaves of olles out of the folds of her dress. She had to give her daughter the last instructions.

"You are still a child, Marie Rose, but I know that your heart is a safe place for a secret. Here, take this memorandum, hide it in your clothes and read it through every day. And every day investigate the questions which it contains. I have written down the words in Arabian and Tamul alternately so that no one – in the event of the list being lost – can decypher it. But you have had practice in these arts, you are the cleverest of all my daughters, can speak seven languages and write four kinds of writing. Here is the first question: Have the English intervened with Anwar ed Din? Have they bribed him – that is the chief question. Will you be able to find the answer?"

Marie Rose laughed. "Of course, maman, I have already carefully thought out how I shall begin the game. Can you guess who will be my best friend in Madras within a few weeks?"

Jan-Begum thought for a moment. Then her face lit up and she clapped her hands. "Oh, I know, I know! Ibn Batuta, have I guessed right?"

"Do you remember how he courted me when we were in Madras last year? – Do you think there could be a better source than the Governor's interpreter?"

"The only question is whether you will succeed in making this source murmur."

"I shall succeed", cried the girl, kissing her mother. "But how can I send you my news?"

"Every week one of my girls will come to you. But if you see a one-armed man sitting in front of your door begging for food, do not drive him away. Ask him his name. If he says he is called Saveri Mutu he comes from your mother."

The girl repeated the name once or twice to impress it upon her mind. Then she jumped up and threw herself into the arms of Don Pedro Coyle de Barneval, her husband, who had come to fetch her.

The depths of night lay over Pondicherry when at last Monsieur and Madame Dupleix settled down to work together. The guests had separated, the servants were dismissed.

The bridal pair were on the way to Madras immediately behind the retreating troops and would long since have sought repose in one of the rest houses which line the Indian roads.

M. Dupleix had taken the most important dispatches up into the bedroom with him. With hushed voices they discussed the documents one after another.

"They really seem to think in Paris that it can all go on like this", Dupleix gathered his reports together. "They take the Imperial dummy in Delhi for a power and refuse to be convinced that India is verging on the complete dissolution of all order. Nizam-al-Mulk is incapable of establishing order. They won't believe me. My statement: I have lived in India for twenty years and am free of all illusions! — Their reply: Do what we tell you and not what you think right! — If I do what I am ordered to do from Paris, I shall lose everything. If I do what must be

done here because it is right and sensible, I oppose the King and his Ministers . . .”

“You will do what you think right, Joseph François,” replied Jan-Begum. “There is another, a greater advantage. I tell you, the time has come to make use of this crisis and to found a new French Grand Mogul Empire on the ruins. We shall win more through conquest than through trade. That is our position in a few words.”

“And they forbid us to make conquests! Here read the incredible thing: I forbid you – Orry writes to me – to take a single position from the English. Defend Pondicherry but do not attack under any circumstances. The colonies are there to carry on trade not war. – According to them I ought not to conquer Madras and if I do conquer it, I ought not to keep it!”

Jan-Begum smiled. “According to them your agreement with Anwar ed Din would end the war in India . . .”

Dupleix agreed.

“That would be ridiculous! – But thank God we still have trumps in our hand which nobody dreams of in India, much less in France. You understood my visit to Chanda Sahib’s wife?”

Dupleix nodded. “Only I don’t understand how you intend to bring him into the game?”

“Perfectly simple! We pay the ransom. The Mahrattas demand seven hundred thousand rupees for him . . .”

“Which I would pay out of my own pocket if the worst came to the worst.”

“You will pay it. If he is once free, Chanda Sahib will raise an army of twenty or thirty thousand men in a few weeks. His widow assured me of that, and his younger son who was present at the interview swore to me on the Koran that twenty thousand was the very least.”

“Stop, stop, Jeanne. First I must know – how long do you think it will be before we can count on Chanda Sahib? One or two years at least?”

Jan-Begum assured him of that.

"Then I can play my game with Anwar ed Din Khan to an end in peace. If he has got rid of the English for me for forty thousand rupees he will get me Madras for very little more," said Dupleix grinning.

"How much will you offer him for Madras?"

"Madras itself!"

Jan-Begum clapped her hands. "I understand!" she cried, as quietly as her joy would permit. "We attack the city, he lets it happen because we promise him the conquered city as booty..."

Dupleix nodded in agreement.

"... and once we are in Madras let him take it by force!" Jeanne finished her husband's thought.

"By then I shall be so far with my arming that I shall be able to resist Anwar ed Din..."

"... especially if you can reckon on Chanda Sahib and his twenty thousand men by then," said Jeanne triumphantly.

Dupleix puffed nervously at his pipe, stared thoughtfully in front of him and wrinkled his forehead. But Jan-Begum stroked his cheeks gently. "Don't worry," she whispered, "Nizam-al-Mulk ... we'll get rid of him!"

"How you read my thoughts, beloved!" Dupleix whispered gently.

"As you do mine, darling!" replied Jeanne. They kissed each other tenderly and spun their threads further as they kissed. "Listen to me, Joseph François, let us start from the assumption that your worry is justified. Nizam-al-Mulk is dangerous! He is the Viceroy of the whole of southern India, he cannot possibly allow us to drive his Nabob, Anwar ed Din from the throne, with Chanda Sahib's help. Therefore he will come to the assistance of his old friend..."

"That is just what I am afraid of..."

"No, my dear, that is just what I want..."

Dupleix looked at his wife in bewilderment. She nestled in his arms. It brought him happiness, this proximity of a beloved woman who was at the same time his best friend, That was what enthralled him so, this unusual combination of senseless love and deep reflection, of warm passion and equally warm feeling of power.

"Joseph François, my dear, think – the two boys are both more than a hundred years old, "Jeanne whispered in unusual excitement and her voice sounded as thought she was uttering words of love," think – Nizam is a hundred and one, the Nabob is a hundred and three. Well, they are hardly likely to grow much older. The eldest heir of the Nizam-al-Mulk is hopelessly friendly towards England, so he must not come to the throne whatever happens..."

Dupleix understood. He threw his arms round his wife exultantly and covered her face with kisses. It was some time before Jan-Begum could go on speaking.

"Is it all clear?" she gasped, struggling for breath.

"All clear!" cried Dupleix, "Nizam-al-Mulk and his successor, Nasir Jang must be supplanted by someone who suits us!"

"... they must be supplanted by someone who suits us," echoed Jeanne.

"And who may that be? – my clever Jan-Begum has a candidate in view?"

"She has! Namely Muzaffar Jang, legitimate grandson of the Viceroy, the young son of his favourite daughter and therefore the nephew of Nasir Jang, the rightful successor. We will appoint this Muzaffar Jang, he is young and docile. And Chanda Sahib, the old intriguer, wily, deceitful and ferocious, shall be the young Muzaffar's tutor and guardian! And we..."

"... kill two birds with one stone! We establish the young Muzaffar Jang on the royal throne of southern India and put Chanda Sahib in Anwar ed Din's place!" And Dupleix cried enthusiastically, "That is more than

clever, that is brilliant, that is divine! Jeanne, Princess Joan, the world has never known a woman like you! You would put Theodora's wisdom to shame!"

"Just think, Joseph François, what a lovely couple they will make – the great Chanda Sahib riding with his young Muzaffar Jang against the two old men and their heirs! The very picture – Chanda and Muzaffar! The youngster will regard the older man as his angel. Liege lord and vassal help each other reciprocally to their thrones ..."

"... with the help of France!" cried Dupleix in triumph.

"Certainly with the help of France ..." agreed Jan-Begum hesitatingly. Then she added decidedly, "But above all with the help of Joseph François Dupleix! Just think, my dear, who you yourself will be from this time on! Joseph François Dupleix has not only helped the Nabob of the Carnatic he has also helped the Viceroy of the whole of Southern India, The Subadar of the Deccan, to the throne – should not this Dupleix himself stand behind the thrones of the Deccan and the Carnatic, watch over them and give them instructions?"

"Away with dull, dull trade," Dupleix agreed, "We shall never again compete with the English for wares and markets, never again weigh, calculate and transport! There are better things! Politics! Military power! They lead more quickly to the goal! He who has the power, raises the taxes, and tax-collecting brings one large possessions more quickly and easily than toiling trade ..."

But Jeanne was not listening to her husband. She was still pursuing the train of thought which she had mentioned but had not fully developed. She repeated the sentence, "... should not this Dupleix stand behind the thrones of the Deccan and the Carnatic, watch over them and give them instructions?" And without stopping she now continued the same thought, "Should not this Dupleix be the real ruler of Southern India from this moment on? And from there would it not be a mere step ..."

"... to the throne of Delhi!" Dupleix finished with quivering lips. Then he jumped up and hurled his words wildly across the room, "And on the ruins of Delhi I will build a new India! It shall become a French Empire! And this empire shall surpass all the splendour and glamour of Louis and the Grand Mogul..."

"... and you shall be Emperor, you, Joseph François Dupleix, Grand Mogul and Emperor of the Indo-French Empire!"

The two voices died away. A candle went out with a splutter. The room lay in darkness.

Two people were in a dream greater and mightier than anyone has ever dreamed before. Not even Alexander. Not even Timur. Not even Kuli-Khan Nadir.

But Brahma the god of India, shook his head. And he beckoned to Yama, the god of death, who came to him and the words of Yama were uttered as they stand written in the old, sacred books: —

The die is cast
And cannot be altered.
Thou knowest not
What it conceals.
Only God's pleasure
Will be fulfilled,
He alone
Ordains and creates.

No man hath control
Over His actions;
The Lord is the source
From which all things flow.
Thou art created
Without thought or strength
He it is alone
Who ordains and creates.

II.

The beach of Madras gleamed yellow in the sun. The breakers were tossing balls of white foam on the shore. Whichever way the eye turned it beheld nothing but the dark green wastes of water and the long unending lines of waves dashing themselves against the flat land. Inland stretched the dunes, rising and falling in gentle curves. In the distance, dusty-grey palms towered motionless in the deep blue sky. On the horizon, the angular walls of the fortress of Madras peeped out of the soft cushion of the sand-hills. Bastions planted with thorn-hedges, palisades interrupted by long rows of round loop-holes, and redoubts bristling with guns, surrounded the whole city, which stretched for three miles along the coast.

From this city a young man had fled. Heedless of the sun which beat down upon his bare head, he had been driven out to the boundless solitude of the sea. His golden brown eyes blazed out of deep hollows, his hurried movements and the twitching muscles of his face told of utter despair.

Everything was unusual about this face, which shone pale in spite of the Indian sun. The black hair hung unpowdered down his back, held together by a narrow band at the nape of the neck. The semi-high forehead, the bushy eyebrows, the wide-spreading, curving, nose and the fleshy lips, revealed the fact that the young man included the ancient Celtic inhabitants of the British Isles among his ancestors. Even the square, thick-set body, the broad shoulders, the well-developed legs and the long, powerful arms, confirmed the fact that he came of Gallic stock.

But the most striking of all were still the golden brown eyes which wandered about, flickering and glowing, restless . . . restless . . .

The young man must have prowled up and down the interminable barren shore for many hours before he came to a standstill. For a little while he stared straight ahead.

Then he seemed to come to a decision for he turned round abruptly and ran towards the city, ran into the boiling hot dusty vapour which surged towards him from the direction of the land; he passed through the Water Gate of the fortress and did not stop again until he had reached the streets of the White Town.

The town lay in a profound mid-day sleep. Scarcely a soul was in sight. Only a few Indians, ghostly servants, were balancing their water jugs on their heads with even steps.

When the young man came in sight of the long, straggling buildings containing the clubhouse of the Madras merchants, where the members were spending the mid-day break resting on long chairs, he turned a sharp corner and made his way in a wide circle along the narrow side alleys to the end of the White Town. He held his head bowed, drawn in at the shoulders as though he wanted to creep into himself.

At last he reached a humble house, the last in the White Town, which was now only separated by a palisade from the Black Town where the loam hovels of the natives were crowded close on one another. With hurried steps he entered the house, ran up the stairs and found himself in an almost empty room. Here a wooden table, a stool, an iron bedstead and a wooden chest all stood together. The young man knelt hastily down in front of the chest. With sure, firm movements, he raised the lid and rummaged among a heap of threadbare clothes from which he took a pistol and a little leather bag.

Still panting, he passed his hand over his forehead which was covered with a cold sweat. At last he got up quickly to carry out the resolution which he had made on the beach. Kneeling on the floor, he tested the gun; he cocked it and pulled the trigger. With a sharp report the flint struck the metal and the spark flew. Satisfied as to the serviceableness of the weapon, the young man set about

loading it with every possible care. He shook some powder out of the bag into the barrel, pushed the bullet after it and rammed it firmly down. Then he saw that it was properly primed. Every one of his movements showed his familiarity with the weapon.

The young man now stood up with the fully prepared pistol in the one hand and a little hand mirror which he took out of the chest in the other. He pushed the stool towards the table with his foot and sank down on it. He planted his arms on the table leaf and raised the weapon and mirror at the same time. But as soon as he caught sight of his own features he flung the mirror away from him in haste. The glass struck the wall with a clatter and broke into splinters.

With both arms firmly planted on the table the young man sat there clasping the wrist of his armed right hand with the left one. Now he brought the barrel close to his temple, now he felt the iron tube pressed, round and cold and sharp, against his head, now he bent his fingers.

The flint struck the metal with a ring; the spark flew like lightning.

At that moment Robert Clive's face brightened and assumed that expression which we adopt when we meet a dear, old friend.

Calmly, almost cheerfully he looked into the bony, hollow-eyed face of the familiar man whom he had seen as a three-year old boy in Uncle Dan's study, first on the old woodcut on the wall, with the hour-glass and sickle in the shrivelled fingers ... but then, shortly afterwards, vividly face to face...

On September 29th 1725, Mr. Richard Clive, who was at this time lord of the small manor of Styche near Market Drayton in the county of Shropshire, was presented with his first son by his wife, Rebecca, née Gaskill.

"Give me the boy, Rebecca, I will keep him and bring

him up as my own child, "said Mrs. Bay Bayley to her sister, Rebecca, three years later," look, you have three children already and the fourth is on its way. But my Dan and I have no children and at my age one cannot hope for this divine blessing."

After thinking it over for a long time Rebecca Clive granted her sister's request. Even though the tears came to her eyes, she was not altogether displeased by the offer. It would make things easier for her husband, her irascible husband, who was still young but was already sorely troubled with gout, whose moods were always changing and who could rave and whisper, scold and fondle in the same breath, like the weather in April. The family could not live from the proceeds of the modest farm and Father Clive's legal practice kept within modest bounds. And thus little Bob left the paternal house so rich in dissensions and dramatic events of all kinds.

The Clives had already lived at Stych for many generations. Already under Henry II in the middle of the twelfth century they were established there, average small gentry who were not regarded as anything in particular and in no way rose above their fellow-citizens.

In November 1728 the three year old Bobby, carefully wrapped in blankets, removed in a simple, open waggon to Manchester, to the suburb where Hope Hall lay, the house of Uncle Dan and Aunt Bay. Here he grew up surrounded by the constant, well-tempered love of the good old couple, here he spent the first nine years of his life and in later times his memory always brought him back here whenever he thought of his youth. For him Hope Hall represented the beginning of his consciousness.

And here he experienced that first serious illness which was the cause of the extraordinariness of his character.

It was Christmas 1728. The three-year-old boy lay in his little cot and smiled feverishly while the festive odours

spread through the room and mingled with the sharp smell of the medicine. The flakes were dancing in front of the window; every now and then the shadow of a passer-by fell upon the chalk-white walls. A profound stillness lay over the little room. The noise of the busy city of Manchester did not penetrate as far as this and Uncle Dan and Aunt Bay crept up to their nephew's bed on tip-toes and enquired tremulously and expectantly as to the state of the fever.

Then it happened that the man with the hour glass and the sickle stepped down from the picture and approached little Bob's bed. He stood here impatiently, greedily waiting for the patient to relax. But Bobby did not succumb to the illness; he kept his gaze firmly fixed upon the empty hollows of his visitor and resisted all temptations and threats. Little Bob remained face to face with Death for many days and nights, so long that he finally became absolutely accustomed to the appearance of the visitor and remained intimate with him from now on for the rest of his life. For Death gave way and concluded a pact with little Bob Clive, a pact of friendship valid for all the future – Death undertook never again to take the contracting party by force or to demand his company against his will. – Bob Clive undertook to seek out the contracting party voluntarily and not to make him wait too long for his friendly visit.

The two friends kept the pact. They met again many hundreds of times in the course of the next forty years but all these meetings only served to renew the friendship. And their acquaintance became ever more cordial and familiar until at last Clive invited his friend to him . . ., for the first time in 1745 in his nineteenth year when he tried the pistol in Madras.

The first glance of the three-year-old had penetrated so far into the dark regions whose blackness and uncertainty contains so much terror for humanity that from now on

the land of shadows remained a familiar country whose threshold he was ever ready to cross. And from that very hour he manifested that peculiarity which, according to the unanimous depositions of his contemporaries, marked the three-year-old boy just as it did the youth and man – that was the complete absence of the slightest feeling of fear.

Other mothers' sons are reckless or brave and perform rash deeds. But Bob Clive's fearlessness took on another colour, it rested on a complete lack of feeling for danger and to a certain extent represented a negative kind of courage. As others are called colour-blind because they cannot distinguish between red and green so Clive can be called danger-blind. Men of this type either go to their graves early or turn the world upside down. Fridericus who always had a bottle of poison beside him, determined not to survive a final defeat, was one of these.

So Death formed this pact with the three-year-old Bob Clive. Then he retired. The crisis was past, little Bob got well.

A terrible howling was heard. Startled out of the sleep into which they had at last fallen, worn out with many nights of watching, the kind old Uncle Dan and the anxious, delicate Aunt Bay came hurrying along in their nightshirts and nightcaps filled with the fear that the sickness had returned. Little Bob stood before them supporting himself with his hands on the railing. The child's body was dreadfully wasted away but he was stamping wildly and uttering ear-splitting yells. So the frightened faces of the old couple brightened. Nobody need worry about the health of anyone who could use lungs and limbs so freely.

But it soon became clear that a profound change had taken place in little Bob. From that day on he showed an impetuosity, which exceeded all bounds, a wildness, unruliness and obstinacy such as no one had ever seen before in so young a child.

"The boy is patient and good so long as he is ill but has become intolerably wild and headstrong ever since the moment he began to get better," the worried uncle wrote to the parents.

From sheer joy at his recovery the kindly old people may have been more indulgent towards the boy than was good for him. He tyrannised over them according to all the instincts of his nature. "He is up in arms at every opportunity, shows wildness and a desire to dominate. I do what I can to subdue this little Caesar and try to encourage good instincts, amiability, patience and friendliness in him. I consider this of supreme importance. Otherwise he will never become a good and virtuous man and finally – he will not always have my advice and help in the future..." Uncle Dan complained in a later letter.

Aunt Bay achieved as little by love and kindness as did Uncle Dan by severity. The worthy woman could not guess that she had before her a little man of a unique type, one whose strange character she was not able to understand. She worried and fretted in the depths of her heart when she thought of her nephew's future, since in her opinion he could never become a useful human being if he went on as he had begun. The eyes of the essentially good old couple, incapable of seeing anything abstract, perceived nothing but an exceptionally unruly, difficult boy whose wild impetuosity and tendency towards overhasty decisions and startling changes they tried to curb by means of education. And it was not until much later that Uncle Dan realised what an extraordinary soul was hidden in his pupil.

As long as Bob was young, people did their best with him. They had great hopes of a specially nice new suit which was given him to rouse his vanity and to civilise him by this ruse. For he also promised to prove himself worthy of the gift. But the good resolution was not kept. During the very first hour in which he wore the suit he met a neighbour's boy, a nice lad whom Bob loved with all his

heart but who did not want to do exactly the same thing on this occasion. To feel this opposition and promptly to break it, was one and the same thing. Regardless of clothes and promise Bob hurled himself on the playfellow and soon they were both rolling in the thick mud. Bob's will to win, his determination not to suffer any opposition and to overcome all obstacles, was stronger than any other emotion.

According to contemporaries who were witnesses of the troubles which Bob caused, an exceptional severity would have been the means of altering his character. "But as it was," these clever people asserted later, "the sparing of the rod altered the appearance of three empires."

Little Bob's secret lay as it appeared later in nothing else than his unusual intimacy with Death. He who feels no fear of death remains unafraid of life and men. This fearlessness strengthened Bob's will and made him uncontrolled. In this lay the foundation of all the difficulties which he prepared for himself and others.

He was a man and his anticipation of what men would do, was based on himself. He measured others by his own standard and expected them to act accordingly. He assumed that they were just as fearless and strong-minded as he was himself. In this expectation he was repeatedly disappointed. If he went close to them and struck them he received a thrust and parry which was considerably weaker than he had anticipated. That surprised him. Amazed, he realised how ready men are to acknowledge a really strong will and to let it rule unchecked even when they find it unpleasant.

The discovery proved decisive for him. As a result of it he smote the world with his fists. And the world – apparently – did not strike back but left him in the belief that he could do as he liked. But imperceptibly it drew away from him, shut itself off from him, left him alone. Sympathy with men became more and more difficult, the breach became wider and wider. And so the double

misunderstanding arose – men fled from him because they were afraid of him – he felt neglected and banished by them. Thus, while still a child, he became an outcast. But in curious contrast to his isolation and the difficulties which arose from it there developed the will to conquer. The growing determination increased the growing difficulties. The beating of his fists became more and more violent as the feeling of solitude became stronger – and the solitude increased with the flight from these beating fists – until there broke out in him a panic before God and his predestined lot.

This panic dominated his youth from now on. It consisted of a distrust in his own destiny. More and more the consciousness sank into his soul that he was not one of God's favoured children, that no angel watched over him, no star guided him. God was good and gracious to all other creatures – but not to him. God granted men wealth and possessions, let them strive and grow, appointed goals for them and let them win or lose, gave them success or failure – but He left this one life to its own fate.

If he had to do without the help of God – such was the youth's creed – if God had forgotten His own then he must pursue his path through life without help from above. This conviction took complete possession of him. If nothing was to be given to him then he would win things by stubborn pertinacity, by struggling and by fighting. If there was no God for him then he must be able to manage without a God.

Clive the elder wanted his son to study law and to follow him in his profession. So Robert was sent to the necessary schools. Here he began to contradict his masters and to order his school-fellows about. It appeared to be the impulse to command which dominated him more than anything else. "His daring audacity," became a nightmare in his vicinity. He had soon made himself impossible in the

first school, was expelled and wandered to the next where the game began afresh. If anyone seized hold of him he either ran away or brought about his expulsion as a result of it. So it went on from year to year. Only once was a teacher found, Doctor Eathon by name, who felt a trace of the nature and mind of this boy and so prophesied: "If he is not killed before he grows up, but is given a chance to use his talent, he will make his name in history." But even with Doctor Eathon, Bob's antipathy to sitting still and intellectual work revealed itself. And so he was sent back home to Market Drayton. Here the incident took place which was still repeated about him in that district a hundred years later.

Dissatisfied with his pocket money as well as with what he was given to eat, dissatisfied with his whole position, the twelve-year-old boy decided to improve his lot by force. Since he was not provided with sufficient apples or sufficient pennies he obtained some for himself. He gathered all the dissatisfied children of his own age about him. Since there were sinister, dark deeds to be performed they trusted in sinister, dark Clive whose society they otherwise avoided, formed themselves into a gang and accepted his leadership. Soon some of the most expensive shopwindows belonging to the shopkeepers of Market Drayton were broken without them being able to convict a single one of the rascals who perpetrated it. And it was not long before the Market Drayton shopkeepers were filled with alarm. This was what young Bob had wanted to bring about. He set himself at the head of his gang, went from shop to shop in broad daylight and struck bargains.

"Your ... or your neighbour's ... window has been broken, Mr. So-and-so," the young whipper-snapper announced, "No one is in such a good position as I to protect you from the repetition of such an attack upon your property. It is true that I must receive a little compensation, shall we say twopence and a pound of apples a week ..."

"Twopence and a pound of apples a week," the shop-keeper would repeat thoughtfully, working out how great his chances were and how small the risks, and finally he would assent.

For weeks Bob collected the agreed tribute, going from shop to shop, considerably improving his position and that of his companions. But one day one of the merchants was struck by the ignominy of this dependence upon the favour of a halfgrown boy and he refused to pay the tribute. The twelve year old robber chief dreamed of revenge, found a means of taming the rebel and set out to put his plan into action at once. There was a cesspool nearby into which the inhabitants had emptied all their dirt and refuse for years. One night, the boys made a breach in the wall to drain off the water. A ditch was dug and everything seemed in order. But when the dirty water began to flow out, it broke through the sides of the little ditch and sought its way abroad. Bob Clive saw the danger at once – the danger that the filth would run away in a few minutes without having reached its destination. Unaccustomed to putting up with unforeseen eventualities he threw himself full length into the breach, stretching out his body and clothes without thinking of the stinking water and compelling it to follow the desired course. According to plan the filth flowed into the merchant's shop and cellar.

Robert Clive was again victorious. The furious shop-keeper complained to Clive senior. The latter, no less unruly and temperamental than his son, wanted to bring into action at last that rod whose „sparing had so essentially altered the appearance of three empires." But he had reckoned without his son. The latter was seen running across the market place. He rushed to the old Gothic church of Market Drayton, climbed the steps in the huge, ancient tower which reached up towards Heaven like a threatening finger and a few minutes later appeared on the gutter at a dizzy height. Here, just under the spire, some old

stone gargoyles stretched far out beyond the edge of the tower as water spouts.

Already the horrified men and women were gathering in the market place and with their heads thrown back were looking up at the old church tower in terror. A woman fainted, little girls screamed, the citizens shook their heads, the schoolboys yelled warnings heavenwards. They were all staring up at the water-spout on which, hardly recognisable at that dizzy height, young Bob stood with his hands in his trouser pockets completely unmoved by the alarm which he had caused.

When the heads of some brave men appeared behind him, Bob Clive calmly turned round and announced that he would only abandon his dangerous position if he was granted absolute freedom from punishment.

In order to bring the terrifying play to an end they were prepared to yield.

But Bob Clive said he would only be satisfied when he had been promised complete absolution for every one of his accomplices. Then he condescended to return to a normal and safe position.

Bob had won his victory. And once more this victory cut him off from companionship with humanity, which has little sympathy for those who win victories over its comfort and customs. They not only feared and avoided him they hated him; for them he had become, "Robber Clive" and "Rogue Bob".

"You're not only bad you're stupid as well", said the desperate father, "you're not only 'Robber Bob' and 'Rogue Bob' as the people say but you're also 'Idiot Bob'." And summing up the course of his judgement on his son he concluded with the words, "He is making progress but in evil!"

What did one do with good-for-nothing fellows, with anti-social elements, with outrageous victors over custom and usage?

One sent them there where the pepper grew and so one was rid of them.

One lovely December morning in the year 1742 the seventeen-year-old Clive found himself among a dozen other youths (whose fathers were sending them to India for reasons similar to those for which Richard Clive was sending his) in the reception hall of India House, the headquarters of the East India Company in Leadenhall Street, London. The youths were waiting for the decision as to whether they would be accepted or not. They had just taken a small examination in which they had had to show their knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic.

After a little while the door opened, one of the councillors appeared and called seven of the youths in to him, including Robert Clive.

These seven had passed the examination. They were engaged and would be entrusted with posts as clerks in Madras.

Robert Clive stood a little apart from his companions and let the flood of instructions and injunctions flow over him. Nor did he take any notice of the pale little fellow who clung timidly to his comrades, who answered to the name of John Walsh and who was later to play a by no means insignificant role in his life.

Clive was to be the first to travel out to India. He was granted a few days to look about him in London, then he boarded the ship which was to take him to the new, old world.

In January 1743 he went on board. He did not take too many happy memories with him. Aunt Bay, whom he had loved the most, was dead. The love which bound him to his mother scarcely went very deep and he was on cold terms with his father. His thoughts went back most cordially to Uncle Dan and the happy hours of the early childhood which he had spent in Hope Hall. He left no

friend, no playfellow, no girl behind him in England. And only when he thought of the citizens of Market Drayton did he smile – but it was a bitter, melancholy smile since they included all those who heaved a sigh of relief because they were now free of his presence.

It was with curious feelings that the young man went on board the 'King George'. He regarded this journey as the last chance which he was offering to Fate to treat him more kindly. This chance was by no means great, there was no doubt about that. India was a hell. Truc, men drove through the streets of London in carriages covered in gold, lucky adventurers, who possessed gorgeous clothes and diamonds, surrounded by beautiful, painted women; these admired and envied adventurers who had become rich so quickly and recently were popularly called 'nabobs' and they were witnesses to the inexhaustible possibilities offered by a stay in India. But nobody mentioned the many who returned home from the Far East sick and broken. Still less did one refer to those who did not come back at all. Moreover the prospects of coming to London later as a 'nabob' were not very great but Clive was prepared to take the risk and to offer Fate this possibility of his return. At least he could count on seeing something of the world and of life. Many wonderful things were told about India, about its heat and its dangers but also about its splendour and its beauty.

No one accompanied Bob to the ship and so he had no need to take leave of anyone. On board he was received by a sailor, a hunchbacked little man who introduced himself as the steward and announced his readiness to perform any services required of him. He led Clive to his cabin, a gloomy room which was so narrow that Bob could touch the two opposite walls with his outstretched arms.

"You will live here, sir," said the sailor.

"And how long will the voyage last?" asked Clive.

"If it lasts four months we shall consider that a short time," came the reply, "but even if it lasts eight months we shall be pleased ..."

"How's that?"

„Because then it won't last twelve, fourteen or twenty months!"

"Twenty months?" Clive wrinkled his forehead; his brows drew together into one thick, black tuft. The distrustful glance with which he looked about him was caused by the narrow room.

The hunchback took the movement for an expression of fear and set about making the slightly-built youth really frightened. For this he had no need to stretch his imagination but rather to keep strictly to truth, for it was depressing enough.

"Young sir, twenty months are still good fortune," he began, "for in many years half the total number ships never reach their destination at all. The possibilities of perishing on a voyage to East India are numerous and varied. First there are storms and shipwrecks with the possibility of drowning. Then there are strandings on desert islands with the possibilities of dying of hunger and thirst and of being killed and eaten by savages. Then there are fevers, scurvy and all the diseases which break out on board. Finally one can fall into the hands of French corsairs and Arabian pirates. But the most perillous of all is the Indian Ocean. There, there are calms lasting for months which lead to hunger, thirst, sickness, sunstroke and madness. But if the wind blows, the Mahratta pirates appear in their fast, well-armed boats, Kanhochi Angria's men thirsting for attack. He is the pirate prince of the coast of Malabar and not a single year goes by, without him taking a few merchantmen of the English, French and Dutch, East India Companies ..."

"And exactly why are you telling me all this, my man?" asked Clive, "did you think I might be afraid?"

"Oh, no, no," stammered the hunchback. He noticed the threatening expression on Clive's face and it gave him an uncomfortable feeling. He clearly wanted to dismiss this feeling for he began afresh, "Actually there is no danger for the 'King George' as long as I am on board," he said proudly, "in fact, the captain takes me with him as a talisman on account of the many dangers and when a gale blows or there is some other risk I must always go on the bridge. Then they all catch hold of my hump, that brings luck. You only need to watch out and see whether I am on the bridge, young sir, then it means, take care ..." And approaching confidentially he added, dropping his voice, "To tell the truth you don't need to lay your hand on the Cross, it isn't necessary for you ..."

"Why?" asked Clive swallowing his wrath.

The hunchback came close up to him, stood on tiptoe to reach Clive's ear and whispered with a chuckle, "Because you have a charm yourself, a hump, that brings luck ..."

Clive raised his fist angrily. "Go to the devil, you wretch, with your fairy tales," he cried.

The little man retreated to the door and disappeared. A second later he stuck his head into the room again and whispered "All the same, sir, you have a charm! True it's not visible to ordinary eyes but I, I can see it ..." and quickly pulled the door to behind him.

"Chatterbox," shouted Clive. He set down his little case. This contained the few goods and chattels which he needed immediately for the journey. But apart from that it contained one possession of great value, a letter of introduction from some friends of his father's addressed to the most powerful counsellor in Madras. This letter was intended to help the young man over the first difficult years and to open up the possibility of a rapid advancement for him.

Bob Clive left the narrow little room which from now

on was to be his home for many months and went on deck. Here he saw that they were just shipping the two chests containing the goods and chattels given to him by his mother and father, a supply of clothes, shoes, hats, wigs, linen and general necessities which would save him from having to make any purchases at the very beginning.

Together with the 'King George' and with the same destination, the 'Lizzie Anderson' weighed anchor. Clive watched with interest the manœuvres of the two ships which would now sail away side by side for many months. Later, when the coast had long since faded from sight, Bob set about studying the ship with all its holds and equipment as far as it was accessible to him.

The 'King George' was one of the most famous East Indiamen and as such a merchantman. She had a huge, wide-projecting belly and with it a considerably large capacity. Nevertheless she was exactly like a man-of-war belonging to the Royal Navy for her two sides presented a magnificent double row of bronze cannons which were always ready to receive an assailant with a fiery bark. In addition she also carried a majestic thirty-two pounder on deck. Under these circumstances, allowing for stowage and armaments, very little room remained for the passengers and for that which a hundred years later was called 'comfort'.

Such an East Indiaman formed a little world in itself. There, fourteen-year-old boys coming straight from the commercial schools were travelling together with sixty-year-old merchants fleeing from bankruptcy. The older men had all suffered shipwreck on the sea of civil life and were crossing the ocean to seek their fortunes afresh. Such people were called 'griffins' to indicate their desire to snatch and win, a name which they kept even after their landing in India, in fact, until they had settled down among the merchants and officers there and were absorbed into the small but mixed society of the European Indians.

"It seems really strange to me that we haven't a single woman on board," observed Clive.

"Women don't travel to India," he was informed by a ships officer, "nobody wants to have anything to do with them over there. The older merchants amuse themselves with the dancing girls, the younger ones only want to get rich in order to attain the enviable position of the older ones. Even the married men often don't take much notice of their wives and prefer the Indian dancers. Oh well, you will soon know more about that than I, sir."

"Besides," added another officer, "women on board would be very dangerous for us, that applies to us sailors as well as to the passengers. No wonder, when the length of the voyage makes people oversensitive and irritable squashed together as they are in a narrow space. On such a long journey to East India likes and dislikes find forcible expression, friendships are formed closer than friendships usually are on dry land and enmities arise which burn more fiercely than other enmities. So practically every voyage ends with a number of duels which are fought immediately on landing. But if there are women on board then there are encounters which take place on the spot and which often assume the character of a hand-to-hand fight."

"And something else seems strange to me," one of the other travellers joined in the table conversation, "and that is that there is not a single one of us passengers who have been to India before. We are all going there for the first time."

"That is also easily explained," came the reply, "actually no one goes over there twice."

"And why is that?"

"In India one either perishes or becomes a millionaire, there is no alternative."

So the first fortnight of the voyage passed without any remarkable incidents taking place. Madeira and Teneriffa

were soon passed and, always accompanied by the 'Lizzie Anderson', the 'King George' held its course for Brazil.

Robert Clive spent his time learning as much about everything connected with navigation as was possible for a spectator. When, at noon, the officers manipulated their quadrants and sextants to determine the ship's position, he put in a regular appearance and watched their manipulations and calculations from the prescribed distance.

His attempts to visit the captain's bridge and to observe the pilot were defeated by the unfriendliness of the captain. He, like the majority of his colleagues, was a ruffian and a brute. The captain of the 'King George' was particularly bad. Towards his passengers he played the fine gentleman; his ship's boys and ordinary seamen he treated with kicks and blows. The sailors accepted the ill-treatment without a murmur and made it clear that they were used to this kind of chastisement. Apparently things were no different on other ships.

One morning when Clive came on deck earlier than usual he witnessed one of those punishments which serve to maintain discipline. An ordinary sailor lay on a chest, his hands and feet held firmly by other sailors while yet two more belaboured his bare back with two ropes. The thing that remained incomprehensible to Clive was the behaviour of the other sailors. They stood in a circle round the spectacle, laughing, cheering on the floggers and accompanying the screams of the whipped man with joyous cheers. The pain-distorted face of the ill-treated wretch stuck firmly in Clive's memory. But with what astonishment did he come across the same man a few days later in similar circumstances but this time in the role of an active participant laughing for all he was worth and applying his blows with especial zeal and especial force.

At last they came in sight of the coast of Brazil. The first part of the route to India, which had been followed by travellers to India for two hundred and fifty years,

was approaching its end when a storm arose and in a short time reached a tremendous force. Since it was intolerable in the lower part of the ship, Clive went on deck.

Involuntarily he glanced up at the captain's bridge. The sky had grown so dark that Clive could distinguish neither people nor circumstances. It was not until a flash of lightning lit up the sky for a few seconds that he perceived the captain standing beside the helmsman on the bridge. And Clive also recognised the third man who was standing up there — it was the hunchbacked steward. So the fellow had not lied.

The lightning flashes followed one another without intermission, sometimes in such quick succession that one could look round and clearly pick out men and parts of the ship.

Then suddenly the 'Lizzie Anderson' ran onto a rock a few hundred yards away, split and sank within a few minutes before the eyes of the horrified Clive. When, a few seconds later, the 'King George' sped past the scene of the accident at an appropriate distance the sea had covered up every trace of the tragedy with extraordinary speed.

A few weeks later the 'King George' also met with a severe misfortune. It was three o'clock in the morning. Bob was asleep in his hammock when a piercing shriek rang in his ear. He rushed out of the cabin in horror and ran on deck. The 'King George' was stranded.

When he had recovered from the shock he just caught sight of the captain giving the steward a resounding box on the ear as he hurried along. If the hunchback had been on the bridge in time the accident would not have occurred. Of that the captain and crew were convinced.

When the necessary repairs were being made to the ship on the following day, it was discovered that Clive's few possessions were among the part of the load which had been lost. Bob now owned nothing but the clothes

in which he stood and the letter which he had fortunately kept in the cabin with him.

This first blow was quickly followed by a second.

In a fierce storm Clive was washed overboard. The captain happened to notice the accident and threw the drowning man a rope with a bucket attached to it. In despair, Clive battled with the waves, struggling to reach the rope. In order to save his bare life he had to get rid of all impediments. Thus he lost the last of his clothes and possessed nothing more than his bare life when he re-appeared on deck.

In this position he was compelled to appeal to the captain for clothes and money. The captain, who was not only a bully but a rogue as well, lent him what was necessary but on condition that he paid a usurious rate of interest and the young man realised what this meant. Now even the meagre salary which he would earn in Madras was severely encumbered.

He had undertaken the journey with but slight expectations. Now he saw himself disappointed even in these modest hopes. This depressed him and cut him off from companionship with the more fortunate.

The ship had to lie in Rio de Janeiro for nearly nine months to have the damages repaired which it had suffered in the Atlantic Ocean. During this time Clive lived none too well on the borrowed shillings in a city which rightly had the reputation of being the most expensive port in the world. Here, for the first time in his life, it occurred to him to spend his time usefully. He assiduously learned Portuguese and listened long and willingly to tales of the old conquistadores who had conquered the country in the first place and of their deeds. And so he obtained his first glimpse of the nature of colonial conquest.

At last the ship again put out to sea. The second part of the journey took it to the Cape of Good Hope. During this voyage he saw no land for weeks on end. They put

in at the Cape. The ship was again in need of repairs and the sailors and passengers felt sick and exhausted after the long voyage.

When the 'King George' reached the Indian Ocean, it chanced upon one of those calms which return every year, interposing between the change of winds when the north-east monsoon of the winter and the south-west monsoon of the summer take over from one another. For days on end the 'King George' lay still with slack sails on the calm water. The sun beat down on the ship with its pitiless rays, the masts creaked, the planks glowed and sweated drops of black and brown resin out of their pores. The travellers' tempers grew worse from day to day. The community life in the confined space, the lack of comfort, the heat, the monotony of food and drink irritated them and put them out of sorts, bringing them into enmity with one another. The general ill-feeling was most intensely directed against young Clive, who finally detached himself completely from his fellow-travellers.

The endless days during which the ship drifted becalmed on the motionless sea were used by Clive for reading. He sat on a chest in the bow in the shade of the sail and read about the country to which he was travelling. There he learnt about the ancient culture of the Indians, about their great achievements in mathematics, medicine and surgery, about their poetry, about their marble palaces whose grandour and splendour puts the cathedrals of Saint Mark and Saint Peter, of Venice and Rome, in the shade. And he read about elephants, perhaps with diamond trappings, who carried sovereigns, about peacocks, about tigers and snakes which spring out of the impenetrable jungle, about weird gods with many arms and many legs, about gruesome diseases and dreadful customs, about the oppression of the masses in brutal servitude, about child marriages and the burning of widows, about sweet poisons which envelop the senses, about wonderful, beautiful women who walk naked

through the streets, about a thousand wonders of all kinds. And he would not have been eighteen years old if his boyish heart had not been raised to joyous expectations in the face of such fairy tales.

But he also read about heroic deeds and conquests. For the first time an ancient classic fell into his hands. The ship's library contained a translation of Arrian's biography of Alexander. In this book the life and struggles of a great man, general and conqueror of the world appeared before his eyes for the first time. He also seized upon the tales of the 'Thousand and One Nights' and they provided him with a first idea of the oriental mind, of their tendency towards cunning and craft, of their delight in it and of the zeal with which they practice the art of deception.

One morning, the golden beach of Madras appeared on the horizon. Soon the walls and palisades of the city became visible and the flat roofs of the houses and barracks. A few hours later the ship cast anchor in the roads. A gun was fired. Hundreds of boats shot out to the 'King George' and surrounded it. The couriers and servants of the Company clambered down into the boat first. The ordinary passengers followed them later. Amid the Indian boatmen's deafening cries of "Ja-li-Ja-li", the canoes shot through the thundering surf at the risk of being upset at any moment. At last the coolies lifted the travellers on their slippery, spray-covered shoulders and carried them ashore. Now they went though the deep sand across the dunes to the St. George's water tower and entered the city of Madras.

Here young Clive was struck by a new and harder blow. When he appeared at the headquarters of the East India Company with the letter in his hand, he learned that his protector had already left India. Owing to its long duration, the voyage so rich in misfortunes had robbed the young man of his last hope.

Bewildered, Clive stepped out into the street which

glittered and glowed in the sun. There he stood, hardly daring to look down at himself. He knew how badly the threadbare clothes fitted, how dirty his wig looked, how shabby his shoes and how worn down his heels were. The last few shillings which he jingled in his pocket were borrowed like everything he wore.

But the sorry appearance which he presented did not worry him. Nor was it the misfortunes themselves which depressed him. He knew no fear and therefore no fear of life. But the obstinacy with which misfortunes and antipathies dogged his footsteps and the deeper meaning which he contrived to read into this fate, embittered him and stirred up his spleen. The conviction that he was predestined to misfortune poisoned all his emotions. The suspicion of fate returned, the state of disfavour.

But still Bob Clive did not give up the struggle. He was more firmly determined than ever to defy the malicious intentions of fate and to take what was due to him by force.

On the following day he was roused from slumber by a shot. This shot was fired every morning outside the house where the clerks lived, to summon them to work.

Clive got up and left the bare, white-washed walls of his miserable room, exchanged them for a short time with the bare, white-washed walls of the uninviting church and then went to his work. Until noon he now stood at a long desk in a line with his companions, entering figures in a ledger and looking up at the little windows through which the light streamed, hot, gleaming and always fierce and penetrating. At midday he exchanged these surroundings for the clubroom which was no more inhabitable or inviting than the other rooms in which he now spent his life. Here the clerks ate at wooden tables, joining together to busy themselves with card-playing, sleeping and perspiring as long as the oppressive midday heat lasted.

At four o'clock they returned to work, then they went to church again, then back to the clubhouse to eat, play cards and perspire.

So one day passed like another.

"A dog's life, we lead here," muttered Clive to his neighbour, a slim little fellow who answered to the name of Stone. But Stone did not reply, shrugged his shoulders and bent lower over his books.

"And for a dog's salary," Clive continued rather louder, exasperated by his companion's failure to answer him.

"Shut up," Stone now hissed, "we are here to work and not to chatter."

Clive threw the pen down on the book, and took a step backwards intending to reply, for his glance fell on Stone's suit and he saw the holes and tears, the darns and patches with covered this coat, these trousers, these stockings, the whole suit still shabbier, still more threadbare than his own.

"When one wears such a coat . . ." he wanted to go on when suddenly a large, fat, elegant gentleman stood before him. It was Mr. Hornby, in whose office Clive was working.

"Private discussions are forbidden during working hours, Mr. Clive," said Mr. Hornby. "You must obey orders here! You have already attracted my attention once or twice. I am warning you in your own interests."

Mr. Hornby paused, let his glance wander disapprovingly and admonishingly over the bowed heads of his clerks and went on, addressing himself now to the general community, "Anyone who thinks of stirring up trouble and criticising the Company's fixed salary may sail home by the next ship. Remember that, gentlemen."

Clive wanted to fly into a temper but his glance fell upon the young man standing opposite to him at the other side of the desk. This young man shook his head gently, almost imperceptibly and gave Clive a warning look with

his clever, grey eyes. Clive had noticed this man and these eyes on the very first day after his arrival, when he took his place for the first time. The man opposite to him was called Edmund Maskelyne. He was one of the few well-dressed young men among the crowd of ragged, starving, plebian, uninteresting and uneducated clerks. His hair was carefully combed and richly powdered, his serious, symmetrical face indicated a well-educated mind, his modest but confident and dignified bearing gave witness to a well-balanced soul. This glance, this slight, gentle shaking of the head, was obeyed by Clive. He returned to his place and set about his work. Mr. Hornby muttered a few more words of disapproval and retired to his bureau with shuffling steps.

When work was over at twelve o'clock, Clive contrived to set out on the way to the club beside the young man whom he wished to get to know. "A stupid job," he began, "and a ridiculous, absurd salary! How can one live on that?"

"If you don't get any allowance from home you must borrow," replied the young man.

"And where do you borrow?" asked Clive.

"For that you must go to the Black Town, to the 'bunyans', to the money-lenders or to the Armenians. Or you must go to one of the Jews who live here in the White Town. You had better ask little Stone for information, he lives by borrowing."

"Thanks," said Clive, nodding. Then he quickened his pace to catch up Stone.

The little fellow apologised. Clive waved this aside. "You are right Mr. Stone, what is forbidden, remains forbidden. — A dreadful fellow that Hornby. Are the others the same?"

"All of them! Only Crommelin is different. But I can bear him still less. Nothing's right for him, he wants to upset everything, always rambling on about a new age . . ."

"That Hornby speaks in a tone that makes you think you're still in school," Clive stuck to the theme. Teacher and school, these were the height of hatefulness to him.

"Oh yes, they are like teachers, the gentlemen, the élite," said Mr. Stone, sighing. "But it must be so . . ."

"Why must it be so?"

"Because it has always been so. I know from my father who also began in Madras. It used to be much worse . . ."

They had reached the club, entered the room and sat down at the wooden table to partake of their humble meal.

Clive, Stone and young Maskelyne were the only ones who did not take part in the game of cards which followed the meal. They lay on their chairs in a corner of the room and dozed. At last Clive decided that the time had come to extract information. He expressed his wishes.

"If you want to borrow money, Mr. Clive, you must go to La Pavia or to Fonsica or to Do Porte, you can borrow from them. All the same it won't be very easy for you, since you are only in your first year and so still have eight years before you can trade on your own account."

"And if I don't get any credit?"

"Then you must starve, my dear Clive, or gamble. See there, how Smith is fleecing the wealthy Robertson."

Clive looked where Stone pointed and watched how the said Smith, who was just such a ragged and miserable fellow as Stone, was robbing the elegant, young Robertson, who was clearly supplied with an adequate allowance. Clive shook his head. "Playing – I haven't any talent for that," he said in a tone of deep despair.

"Perhaps you have a protector?" asked Stone.

"I had one but he has left, I was too long on the way . . ."

"A councillor?"

Clive answered in the affirmative.

"A pity! He would have given you credit, he might have shortened the eight years to six or five ..."

Again Clive recognised the hand of his fate, again it was playing its game with him, again it denied him help and favour. "At least I now know what good the introduction would have done ..." he said with a mournful smile.

"Well, perhaps you'll get credit. I'll come with you, Perhaps we can persuade one of the Armenians or one of the Indian banyans. But you will have to pay at least thirty per cent interest."

"My God," groaned Clive, "thirty per cent!"

Stone bent back his head, stared at the ceiling and with the help of his fingers worked out how much twenty pounds would be in eight years at thirty per cent with the corresponding compound interest. Clive interrupted him, "Thank you, my dear Stone, don't bother. Without working it out, I know I shall never be able to pay such a large sum. No, no, there's no point in my trying to get any credit at all."

"But Mr. Clive, how can you say that! However big the amount is it doesn't make any difference! As soon as you can trade on your own!" Little Stone rolled his eyes towards heaven as he uttered the words, "trade on your own". His hopes and desires, his faith, his religion – all that was contained in these few words.

Yes, they led a miserable life, a slave's life. When Clive looked at his companions he had no need to be ashamed of his own shabbiness. Only a few, like Robertson and Maskelyne, wore a whole coat on their backs, favourites who were sent a monthly allowance from home. The others went in rags, toiled in the pitiless heat, as stupid as animals, letting themselves be bullied like school-children by the merchants – and all that for five pounds in all, in the whole year. For this grotesque wage they led their grotesque life, plebian, starving, uneducated,

uninteresting youths devoured by envy and spite, without feeling or manners. The sons of better families rarely strayed here, they did not accept such positions and not even the prospect of future wealth could tempt them to India.

Even the higher employees of the Company regarded their salary chiefly as pocket money. The councillors did not receive more than forty or at the most fifty pounds a year, the officers still less. Only the priests rose to a hundred pounds, for, after all, they had studied, and only the Governor drew a whole two hundred pounds.

Their whole means of livelihood was private trade. The right to that – that was the straw for which they all struggled, governor, councillors and chaplains, merchants and officers, sailors and soldiers and the – women.

The lion's share naturally fell to the higher employees of the Company, the élite. They were the most important people in the town, elected the councillors and occupied the positions of authority. Each of them had laid down a security with the Company, "lest he should defraud his superiors". They had free lodgings at their disposal but they preferred to inhabit their own villas. They also had a right to a crowd of servants who were paid by the Company and had various other special privileges such as a cheaper case of wine from the Company's store on which account they were particularly envied.

In order of rank and prestige these were followed by the priests, they, too, were Company employees, they, too, took part in trade. There was no difference between Catholic and Anglican priests in this. The priests played an important part altogether, for there were only two subjects in which people were interested, about which people thought, about which people spoke: trade and eternal blessedness. But however much the inhabitants of Madras occupied themselves with religious questions, as true Englishmen one thing was certain – of the two mutually

exclusive subjects, trade took the first place. Even the priests dealt with theological obligations as a secondary line. They were altogether extraordinary gentlemen, for the most part such as had incurred some blame at home and for whom Madras was a place of refuge. They were seen drunk, heard swearing and found trading in textiles and opium.

"We have got a new vicar now, he's called Fordyce," was announced in the club one evening, "he comes from Sumatra, he had to flee from there because he had seduced a planter's daughter."

"He'll earn money here. Evans, the chaplain, went home a few years ago with three thousand pounds and was made a doctor in the end, so somebody wrote and told me," another added.

The clergymen were followed in rank by the ten officers, commanders of the four companies and the surgeon, all with the rank and pay of lieutenants, all equal to one another and not placed under any higher commander. It was part of the policy of the East India Company not to show much respect or contempt for their officers. Even the lieutenants only thought of how they could get money. Since their wages were small they defrauded the Company and kept soldiers on the pay lists who had long since died or deserted. But they kept back their pay even from the soldiers who were still in service as often as possible. Then the soldiers deserted and the officers let them go, in order to keep their pay for themselves.

"No one has any respect for us," complained Lieutenant John de Morgan. "The Governor doesn't receive officers on principle. I shall have to keep an inn and play the host to earn my living."

"I shall have to borrow money from the Jews to join in the business," Lieutenant de Gingans chimed in.

And when the Governor demanded an inspection of the

pay lists, Lieutenant Holland, explained to him, "We need at least a hundred pagodas a month to maintain our existence, so how can we keep the soldiers? Every officer must have at least forty non-existent people on his list if he wants to live himself."

The town of Madras contained four hundred Europeans, of whom forty were employees of the Company and three hundred, members of the garrison. The remaining sixty belonged to the so-called 'freemen inhabitants', resident clans who were permitted to live in Fort St. George. Their sons were born here, grew up here and carried on trade, and many of them succeeded in getting into the Company and becoming 'élite'. Indian and Portugese blood flowed in the majority of these families. The young freemen inhabitants preferred to fetch their wives from the neighbouring Portugese colony of St. Tomé whose kindred had lived in the country much longer than the English in the young colony of Madras.

Altogether only half the merchants were married at the most and of this half, again only half to white women. Even these women carried on private trade without any connection with their husbands' businesses.

The only inhabitants of the colony who were forbidden to carry on private trade were the clerks during the first eight years of their service. They were forcibly kept from this one means of living in India and that in a climate in which the white man can neither live, nor travel, nor breathe without servants, without sedan chairs and fans.

It is true that even the clerk Clive provided himself with a poor pariah who used to tidy his room and wash his clothes. Such a coolie only cost a few pence. The coolie lived more humbly than an animal in that overpopulated land.

Of all his comrades, Clive liked Edmund Maskelyne the best. He was the son of a scholar (a mathematician), well-

read and well-educated. Clive asked his advice as to how he should spend his time.

"Nicholas Morse, the Governor, possesses a handsome library," Maskelyne suggested, "he's altogether a fine, educated man, a great-grandson of Cromwell but unfortunately without his ancestor's courage and energy. Morse has given me permission to borrow books from him. Speak to him, Clive, and ask him whether he'll let you do the same."

One evening Clive seized the opportunity. He was sitting with Maskelyne and Stone in the corner of the club-room which they had selected for their discussions, when Governor Morse entered the room, accompanied by Ibn Batuta, his interpreter, and the inevitable six flag-bearers.

The young people jumped up from their seats and bowed low. As Morse approached the door leading to the room of the élite, Clive stepped in his way and uttered his request. The Governor listened kindly to the young man and gave him permission to call for one of the books next day.

These were the only friendly and kindly words which Clive heard from one of the élite during the first years of his stay in Madras. Apart from Morse he could not find a single one of the higher employees who treated their subordinates with kindness.

On the following day Clive appeared at Morse's during the midday interval and in response to his request the secretary handed a translation of Plutarch over to him and with this he henceforward occupied his free time.

Clive also asked his friends as much as they knew and could learn about the origin and organisation of the East India Company. They told him how the Company had been founded, how their compatriots had come to the country over a hundred years ago, appearing neither as conquerors nor as colonisers but simply as merchants who craved permission of the nabobs to trade in pepper and spices, how they then formed the first settlements on leased ground

and how they had always lived in fear of the Indian despots, how they had, in fact, often been attacked by Indian armies, massacred and thrown into the sea, but how they had always returned for the sake of the great value attached to spice. And he further learned that even the soil on which Madras stood was in no way English territory but that the Company paid rent for it and were still dependant on the grace of the insolent, Mohammedan warriors. Further he was told that the Indian armies were invincible and that no one dared to pick a quarrel with them since in the event of a conflict the few hundred European soldiers would be faced by many tens of thousands of Indian warriors who were, in addition, armed with elephants, also the Indian armies consisted chiefly of cavalry units such as had never been seen together in such large numbers in the greatest European battles. Clive got to know the internal organisation of the Company, how they paid equal attention to commercial and military interests, how they exercised supreme jurisdiction which the King had granted to them as a privilege and that even the inhabitants of the Black Town submitted to the Company's authority as a result of agreements with the Nabob.

Thus the clerk Clive sought to occupy his spare time as agreeably as possible with instructive conversation and reading. He also did his best in the fulfilment of his duty, appeared punctually at work and performed his task in silence, paying careful consideration to all the regulations.

Sometimes he went for short walks accompanied by Stone and Maskelyne. While Maskelyne enriched his knowledge, Stone instructed him about all the tiny but significant reefs of Indian life and the ways and means of circumnavigating them.

But of India itself, the wonderland, Clive scarcely caught a glimpse. Only on Sundays did he get an opportunity of taking a glance at the life of the natives. Then he would leave Fort St. George with Edmund Maskelyne.

They used to stroll past the fifty houses, the offices and ware-houses, the two churches, the Anglican and the Catholic one, circle round the town, visit the four bastions threatening the country with their four batteries and finally enter the Black Town. They used to visit the bazaars where the Indian merchants offered their wares for sale. These regions were known as the Better Quarter of the Black Town. Like the White Town it was fortified, though not so strongly.

Over the wall of the Better Quarter they reached the so-called Lesser Quarter. Here they examined with curiosity the simple loam huts of the Indians who populated this quarter to the number of forty thousand and here they acquired their first superficial knowledge of the life and character of the lower classes.

They saw under-developed, delicate, impoverished and filthy men and women, a cowardly, timid race with a clearly marked tendency to give vent to its feelings in abuse and the shaking of fists, for they often saw disputants cursing each other but never combatants who assailed one another. This mass of brown, poverty-stricken wretches had no connection with what Clive had read on the voyage about the ancient, artistic, poetic and scientific Indian nation.

If the friends traversed the Black Town they reached an interminable desert. For there was no jungle, no beds of reeds, hardly did they come across a sparsely watered rice-field. Only where the roads ran over the plain towards the south, towards Fort St. David and Pondicherry and towards the west where it led inland towards Arcot did coco-nut trees rise in long rows and Alamaram fig trees, lavish in shade and rich in roots, sprang up from the desert. In the shadow of these tree-tops, oxen drew their coupés surrounded with silken curtains, here trotted the legs of the light-footed litter-bearers, here hurried the fast camel riders, the bearers of news.

This was the land of India, an endless wilderness, this was Madras, a sorry conglomeration of a few villas and an infinite number of loam huts.

And yet ... somewhere beyond this wilderness lay the land of wonder, so near and yet so inaccessibly far. Again and again Clive gazed into eyes which had seen this land and which reflected the memory of it; again and again he heard voices which praised it. He himself looked about him in vain for the magic of India.

Where were the golden streets along which nabobs passed, borne by elephants decked with diamonds? Where did the miraculous marble palaces rise with their artistically modelled walls like finely pierced lace? Where did the lovely ladies walk? Where did the tigers roar, the snakes rustle? Where were the marvels? Where the enchantments? Where was India - where?

Even the reading of Greek classicis was exhausted and the enquiries into conditions in India came to an end.

Clive's attempts at raising money had failed. The depression which weighed upon his soul became ever heavier, the longing for freedom, ever more ardent. Since there could be no relief and no escape, the discords in his character naturally increased. More and more edges and spikes appeared. At last Clive gave way to his ill-humour and lost his self-control. Thus his manner became ever more unbearable to his colleagues. It could not possibly be pleasant for the average clerk to work at the same desk or eat at the same club table as this surly fellow. He did not answer questions and responded to advice with harsh, rude insults. Club conversation made him boil with rage. He neglected his appearance. Since his wig had worn out he wore his natural hair, long and loose and always unpowdered; he scarcely bothered to tie it together in the nape of his neck with a bow. No, it was not pleasant to

pass the time in his company and not without danger either.

But he made his most bitter and striking remarks when the conversation turned on the councillors.

"They always speak in that infuriatingly conceited, self-conscious and infallible tone which I used to hate so intensely in my teachers when I was still a small boy," he fumed aloud in the room. "And this conviction of their own importance! This obstinate clinging to their resemblance to God and the symbols and insignia!"

Painfully disturbed, the clerks bent over their plates and gulped down their food simply to be able to get up as quickly as possible and to disappear from his vicinity. But Bob Clive was not put out. "Idiotic, the things that are important here! In Cape Town, the Dutch pickpocket with whom I stayed, kept baboons in a cage. And the biggest and fattest fellow sat in the middle of the cage and the others bowed down before him. When we threw food to the monkeys the small ones brought the best bits to the big one. He stuffed them in his mouth. And the thanks? Each of those who brought him something got a few boxes on the ear. I always think of this baboon when I see Hornby. Have any of you ever seen him without the regulation six fan-bearers?"

The table was empty. Only Stone and Maskelyne bore with the grumbling Bob. Stone dared to protest, "A councillor has a right to six fanbearers and a chubda as well, a mace-bearer who runs in front with the long silver-mounted mace in his hand calling out his master's titles and honours..."

"Oh, a chubda as well!" sneered Clive. "So far I have been spared that sight at least."

"Just wait, on the first big occasion you'll see each of the councillors going through the streets with his chubda and with three musicians, eight palankeen bearers and six fan-bearers."

"And we are forbidden to have our skins cooled by a single, miserable coolie," persisted Clive.

Now Maskelyne joined in the dispute, "I find it frankly ridiculous the way you flare up about it. If it gives the councillors any pleasure, then let them . . ."

"... and if it gives me any pleasure?" blazed Clive.

"You're only a clerk," insisted Stone, "and there must be differences."

"Oh? Must there? And perhaps these insane differences in pay as well? The one must starve while the other throws money about the streets in handfuls! But I'll alter that!" cried Clive.

"You won't alter that!"

"We shall see about it!" Clive jumped up. But his companions got up as well, for at that moment Governor Morse entered the room.

While the clerks remained in a low obeisance, Clive left his place and stood in the Governor's way. Morse looked at the young man kindly and expectantly. When Clive saw the Governor's benevolent face his courage shrivelled up. He blushed and stammered out a few unintelligible syllables.

"Well, say what you want, Mr. Clive," Morse encouraged the young man.

Clive pulled himself together, threw back his head and with as much causticity as he could muster in face of the Governor's charming expression, he said in a loud voice, "I wanted to tell you, sir, that we clerks cannot live on our wages, that we are starving, worse than that, that we are degenerating, mentally and physically. There, sir, do you see the cards lying on the table? My comrades play and rob each other mutually of the money which they have borrowed from the Jews and Armenians at usurious rates. I'm not speaking of myself . . ."

The Governor took a step backwards. Quietly but with a firm voice, he said, "When you want to borrow books from my library, Mr. Clive, I am at your service. I have

no inclination to carry on discussions of this kind with you." And he turned round and went towards the door. The servants threw the latter open and the Governor strode through the double row they formed. The door shut behind him.

Clive stood in confusion.

Before he had collected his thoughts, the storm broke. "Impudence, impertinence, insolence!" These and other words rang in his ears. But it was not councillors who covered him with abuse, it was his own companions who attacked him.

"We must write to the Governor at once and tell him that we have nothing to do with this bandit," suggested Smith.

Clive stood as if thunder-struck. "But it was for you that I spoke, boys," he stammered in bewilderment, for you, Smith and for you, Stone. Just see what you look like ..."

"We don't want you help!" cried little Stone, he was very pale, even paler than usual. And he clenched his little fists, the fingers black with ink, and stood up threateningly in front of Clive.

The latter lost the last of his self-possession. "You too? And I thought you would stand by me, shoulder to shoulder ..."

"The devil I would!" cried Stone at which point his voice failed him and broke into a clear, shrill note.

"Yes, in the name of heaven why not?"

"Because I too want to be a councillor one day," stormed Smith.

"And because we shall then demand this same respect," added Stone.

"Because we should then likewise refuse to be told off by a disreputable little clerk."

The blood rushed to Clive's head, his muscles tightened, his body seemed to grow. He was just going to raise his

fists when he caught a glance from clever, grey eyes and a shake of the head.

"I should go now," said Maskelyne softly.

Clive nodded to him. His muscles relaxed. Without a word he went out.

"I feel really miserable! I have no more happy hours. Sometimes when I think of England, my home, I am particularly miserable. Shall I never be permitted to see it again?" so the twenty-year-old Clive wrote to Uncle Dan at Hope Hall. He did not know that a few dozen miles away, in Pondicherry, someone was sitting at a gilded writing table, who a decade before had written his misery home in almost the same words, who had also suffered hunger and want and the contempt of councillors and who had yet become a great man with many titles before his name and the broad bands of orders across his breast.

Clive sat between his bare, white-washed walls and wrote letter after letter.

"If only I could return!" he complained. But he knew that this wish could not be fulfilled. What had the man next to him at table on the 'King George' said? – "In India one perishes or becomes a millionaire, there is no alternative!" Well, he would not become a millionaire, of that he was firmly convinced.

Then he read Uncle Dan's letter for the hundredth time and was not ashamed of the round marks which had made the paper soft and crumpled and which were due to the tears he had shed while reading it.

The kind old man wanted to know whether he had not made any friends, whether he still knew no one, since, after all, he had been in Madras for a year now?

Clive seized the pen and wrote the reply.

"I have not yet had a single happy day since I left home. So far I have not got to know anybody. There is

no one whom I could visit without being invited. The only happiness which I have, in my position, is letter-writing. Surely letters were only invented to ease the lot of such settlers and miserable fellows as I am . . ." And once again he stated, "If only I were permitted to set foot on my native land and especially the soil of Manchester I should have reached the goal of all my desires. That moment would grant me everything for which I now hope."

The longing in Clive became ever greater, the desire ever wilder, lending a visible and symbolic expression to his wrath. Since he was twenty years old the appearance of power still meant power itself to him and he regarded an attack on the symbol as an attack on the force which stood behind it.

He brooded. The glow sparkled in his golden brown eyes for the first time; the fiery gleam arose; that scrutinising, roving look which yet clung so passionately, that expression of violence appeared, which was henceforward to precede his decisions. He called his servant. "Get a fan," he ordered.

The Hindu brought what was demanded.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon and time to go to work. But today Mr. Robert Clive would not appear at the desk!

He turned his steps towards the city, followed by his servant, who fanned him. And he regretted nothing at this moment except the impossibility of being able to engage other fan-bearers. He would have liked best to hire five more coolies.

With his nose in the air he strutted along the main street, past the government buildings, the club and the barracks in which his comrades were working. It was nearly half past four – Hornby must appear at this time.

And he appeared. Followed by his fan-bearer, Clive immediately steered along the street in the direction of the councillor.

Now Mr. Hornby came in sight of the young man. Clive noticed distinctly how he started, how he held his hand up to his eyes, how he altered his course and made straight for the malefactor. Clive went on his way without glancing to right or left. He quickened his pace. Soon he was on a level with Mr. Hornby. A few more steps and he had passed him.

Then he heard a grunting and snorting behind him. Curious, he turned round. Just then Mr. Hornby threw himself on the coolie, snatched the fan from him, broke the bamboo rod with furious gestures, tore the leaf and threw it into the street.

Clive was not prepared for such swift reactions. But rack his brains as he would he could think of no suitable reply. Before he had collected his thoughts and raised an objection, Mr. Hornby had already turned his back on him and was sailing towards the barracks.

Annoyed with himself, Clive sent the coolie home and followed Mr. Hornby into the office. Here he took his place and set to work. As he was entering the figures and adding up, he brooded over a new revenge. He was struck by the fact that the councillor clearly refrained from entering the office and addressing him in the presence of the clerks. And even if the young man did not want to admit it – he was very pleased about it all the same. The more he thought about Mr. Hornby's restraint, the more firmly did he convince himself that his antagonist felt weak, that he did not dare to appear again. That raised his courage considerably. So he brooded over fresh revenge and had already formed a plan by the time work was over.

That evening, in the club-room he seated himself in such a way that he could keep an eye on the entrance door. The clerks were sitting at the next table eating their meal. One

merchant after another entered the room. The young people jumped up and bowed every time.

At last Clive caught sight of Mr. Hornby. The merchant had scarcely entered the room, the clerks had scarcely straightened up from their bows, when Clive went up to the fan-bearers with long strides, hastily snatched the fans from them and broke them across his knee, one after the other. And that in front of the club and the whole company of clerks!

The disapproving murmurs of his comrades were mingled with Mr. Hornby's cries of horror and rage. But Clive's movements had been so swift that not one of those standing round had recovered from his surprise before the last fan lay broken on the ground. Clive returned to his table, sat down and stared straight ahead as unconcerned as though Mr. Hornby's wrath and that of the clerks had nothing whatever to do with him.

The merchant stood, quivering and pale, speechless at the insult which had been offered him. He shook his fist in silent rage.

Suddenly a voice was heard from the background. "Yes, my dear Hornby, we shall not be able to maintain these privileges into all eternity." It was Councillor Crommelin, Mr. Hornby's pet enemy who had spoken.

"What do you say?" Mr. Hornby snapped at Mr. Crommelin, happy to escape from his none too dignified position.

"That a new age has dawned," said Mr. Crommelin. I ask you, Mr. Hornby, if such a thing can happen without God the Father chastising the transgressor with thunder and lightning . . ."

Uttering violent curses against Mr. Crommelin, Mr. Hornby ran into the room of the élite. Mr. Crommelin followed him laughing. The clerks eyed one another, embarrassed and perplexed. Then they looked at Clive, who, to their amazement, was still free and unmolested and not

yet in chains or being led into captivity. That was the least they had expected. Now, however, since Mr. Crommelin had publicly taken the side of the miscreant, now they must be prepared for anything.

Then voices were raised. The door opened and the whole crowd of councillors, officers and merchants surged into the room following the Governor. "I prophesied it! We can't maintain this absurd, antiquated regime any longer!" Mr. Crommelin's voice was heard. "These fans have become an epidemic, a mania! One sleeps under the bed punka, one gets dressed under the dressing punka, then comes the breakfast, office and dining punka, not forgetting the church punka, it's absolutely ridiculous! And exactly six ..."

"But there must be differences!" cried Mr. Hornby.

"The differences are there! For that very reason they should not be emphasised!"

"This regime has existed for hundreds of years!"

"What do you want to do then? Do you want to have the young man executed? Do you want to have him tried?"

"We should make fools of ourselves!" agreed the majority of the councillors, "and not only in front of ourselves but also in front of the natives."

The Governor requested silence. The voices were gradually hushed and peace spread over the room. All eyes were fixed on Mr. Morse. The latter separated himself from the group of councillors and advanced to the centre of the room. "May I ask you to come here, Mr. Clive," said the Governor with all the firmness he could muster.

With raised head, Clive approached. When he saw the Governor's serious, kindly face, he blushed. There was so much paternal kindness in it, such deep sorrow over the youthful indiscretion, that Clive bowed his head.

"I wish you to apologise to Mr. Hornby, Mr. Clive."

Clive held up his head at once. Two pairs of eyes bored into one another. The old gentleman's kind, shining ones

met the blazing flame in the dark ones of the young man. "I wish you to apologise, Mr. Clive ..."

"... if you wish it, sir, I apologise," said Clive in a firm tone.

Mr. Hornby approached hurriedly to accept the apology. But there was nothing triumphant about his bearing. The tone in which the Governor and the clerks were speaking to one another was music from another world before which he trembled, never having been responsible for the like before. It was the world of real rulers for whom he felt a deep respect, he, the former clerk who had humbled himself right up to the moment when he could at last humble others. Mr. Hornby cleared his throat. It sounded rather thin when he said, "Yes ... well ... then please ..."

"I apologise," said Clive but it was not quite clear whether he was addressing his words to the Governor or to Mr. Hornby.

The Governor regarded the incident as closed. He nodded once or twice, said, "All right then," turned round and went back into the room of the élite. The merchants followed him.

Only Mr. Hornby still stood on the same spot and looked at the young man in embarrassment.

"Yes, what I wanted to say ..." Mr. Hornby managed to utter at last, "I bear no grudges. You have apologised, the affair is closed. One may forget oneself, but a gentleman is still a gentleman. I should be very pleased if you would dine with me tonight, at my house ... Accompany me ..."

Now it was Clive who was taken aback for a moment. He was not prepared for that! He had given the baboon a box on the ear and instead of striking back it was stroking him? Incredible! Or perhaps not ... Clive had to laugh. It was true, — the little baboons had indeed put up with the boxes on the ear from the big one. Thus Mr.

Hornby was not playing the part of the big, fat baboon, he was only one of the little, meek baboons! Clive opened his mouth and spoke slowly, decidedly and firmly, "The Governor ordered me to apologise. He did not order me to dine with you." With that he turned and left the room.

Angry looks followed him, indignant, irritated looks.

"If he had fallen into my hands he would have got something to remember for the rest of his life!" said the clerk Smith.

Mr. Hornby retired in confusion. As he reached the door, he stumbled against one of the Indian servants who, surprised by his master's sudden approach, had not made way fast enough. Then Mr. Hornby reached right out and gave the coolie a resounding box on the ear. The doubly surprised Indian, reeled, lost his balance and fell head over heels on the ground.

Clive's position became ever more untenable. His rebelliousness grew with his increasing despair and with this the kicks and blows which he aimed at the minds and nerves of his fellow-men multiplied. Thus it came about that he saw himself one morning deserted, cast out, face to face with nothingness and that in a land in which one perished if one did not become a millionaire . . .

What had happened? Nothing that had not happened to him a hundred times already. The same events repeated themselves again and again in his life.

And always he thought he recognised the ordinance of an adverse fate. True he could not absolve himself of guilt. He realised that he expected more of men than they could honestly accept from him. And yet when he went to the bottom of things it was not he who had brought about these unwelcome situations – rather was he repeatedly brought into intolerable positions by a higher power.

No, he could not believe that his mind was filled with a hallucination. He was not fighting with phantoms, he

was fighting a destiny which he could seize with his hands. He was cast out, ever more literally cast out. The evil spirits and demons, his antagonists, led an extremely real, tangible life; they pricked him, struck him, hurled him further and further into misfortune. Had he not the right to strike back?

Had he not been driven out, sent across the ocean to the land where the pepper grew, to die of a fever? Had he not been called a scape-grace, 'Rogue Bob'? had he not been treated as one treated the outcast, the abandoned? And among these exiles who, like him, lived in the land of fever had he not found again all the old, distorted faces, the whole malicious, stupid, jealous, spiteful pack, the army of everlasting opponents? Had he not defended himself as well as he could?

He had given his destiny a chance to show him her favour once more. Destiny had decided against him again, as usual – as usual.

And now he yielded! The embittered soul had lost the strength to carry on the struggle any further without help.

So he had run away, fled to the beach.

Here in sight of the infinite sea, he sought enlightenment and found the strength for the deed. Here he spoke; –

"Oh God, wilt Thou not that I should live in Thy grace? Wilt Thou not hold Thy hand over me? – Then I resign myself! I am not so presumptuous as to seek to live without Thee. Therefore take me away!"

And great and illuminating, there flowed into his soul the realisation that life without grace can only mean giving back this life again. God loved him too! Out of love God had denied His love. Had withheld His help in order to give help. Had left him without guidance in order to guide him to Himself. Thus sense was given to the nonsense, curses became blessings, disfavour favour. He heard the call of God and followed it.

Robert Clive fired the pistol at himself. The flint struck the metal with a ring, the spark flew with a flash.

He remained motionless, in doubt for a moment as to what had happened to him. Then it dawned upon him – the pistol had missed fire.

He examined the weapon in bewilderment. He had loaded it carefully. Why had it not functioned?

Now he raised the pistol, aimed at his hat which was hanging on a nail by the door and fired.

The shot rang out; the hat fell to the ground pierced through. The smoke from the powder filled the room.

That proved that the pistol had been carefully loaded and that it worked. Unaccustomed to being prevented by difficulties from the carrying out of his plans, Clive again set about loading the pistol. Once more he carefully shook the powder out and pressed the bullet firmly down. Once more he sat down at his table, levelled the weapon and fired.

Once more the flint struck the metal with a ring, once more the spark flew and once more the weapon missed fire.

Clive dropped the pistol. It fell on the floor with a crash.

Then, for the first time in his life he was overcome with boundless astonishment. He, whom nothing could stagger, whom nothing could surprise, he found himself completely shaken out of the groove of his sublime self-confidence.

Death had scorned his invitation!

Deep in Clive's memory was engraved that first meeting with the skeleton and in his heart dwelt the knowledge that Death would only visit him when he called him himself; he would never be threatened by dangers which approached him from without. But now he himself had summoned Death and this summons had passed unheard!

Would Death not even respond to an invitation then?

Clive's amazement changed to an immense pride, to a confidence, similar to the confidence of the Gods, in his immortality . . .

But what had the adverse, malicious destiny to do with these circumstances? Perhaps she was only keeping him alive in order to ill-treat him further with kicks and pricks?

Impossible!

He must have made a mistake. In some mysterious way destiny wished him well, even him!

But if that was so the only conclusion was that destiny had great plans for him.

Then the youth jumped up, staggered across the room, turned round and sank down on the bedstead. The growing conviction overpowered him; it exalted him and subdued him at the same time. And the hallucination which had haunted him for almost two decades fell from him. He was like a crab which crawls out of its shell leaving it as old and useless and goes away to grow a newer, larger and better fitting one.

Robert Clive became a man in this moment.

"There, take the pistol, Edmund, and throw it out of the window," he called with a burning face to his friend who had just burst into the room.

Maskelyne went to the pistol and picked it up.

"Throw it out of the window!" urged Clive, "I beg of you. Just think, I have fired it at my head twice and it has missed fire twice."

With a suspicious, distrustful look, Maskelyne turned the weapon over in his hand. Clive guessed his friend's thoughts. "No, no, Edmund, the pistol is in order, it works. There look at my hat, between two miss-fires I shot it off the wall."

With a hurried movement, Maskelyne threw the pistol out of the window.

Clive clung round his neck. "Edmund, you, my friend, fate must have great things in store for me since it has refused my offer."

The friend raised his head and listened. Cries penetrated from the street, the clatter of galloping horses sounded and a mortar-shot was fired.

"What does that mean?"

"War! The seven mortar-shots booming from the citadel across the city and fortress of Madras mean war with France."

III.

The outbreak of war gave Mr. Dupleix the keenly desired opportunity of displaying his many abilities at last and setting directly to work on his lofty schemes. It did not escape his penetrating shrewdness that people in Paris were busy overcoming difficulties lying nearer at hand and burning more fiercely than the Indian ones. For they had to form an alliance with Frederick the Great, conquer the Austrian Netherlands, defeat the English at Fontenoy and, above all, carry on intrigues in Scotland in order to put Charles Stuart, the son of James the Third, on the throne. In the face of such affairs of State, India was left to itself and M. Dupleix.

And M. Joseph François Dupleix utilised the situation for the good of France and himself. In a period of scarcely eighteen months he succeeded in transforming the innocently homely, cheerfully filthy provincial town in the form of which Pondicherry had presented itself until September 1744, into a modern fortress, an important arsenal, a camp full of warriors and war materials. Along the broad deep ditches flowed the water diverted from the river Ariancupan. From the high, strong walls, mortars and cannons looked down threateningly on the country. The dirty, lob-sided dwellings, the crumbling ware-houses and churches were either razed to the ground or provided

with new fire-proof roofs. The Caputian Fathers had pulled down their mouldering church with their own hands and replaced it by a fine, new, massive building. The filthy alleys had given way to broad streets lined with trees. Fountains played in the squares. The public buildings gloried in new facades. Even the government buildings were completed.

In the harbour, Admiral La Bourdonnais' men-of-war lay at anchor so long as they were not actually having a scuffle with the British sovereign's men-of-war and trying to take the wind out of their sails.

From early morning on, drums rolled, muskets cracked, commands rang out and trumpets sounded across the city from the walls and drill grounds. The newly-formed companies of voluntary French infantry drilled tirelessly. At a distance from them, the battalions of freshly recruited Indian soldiers, called 'sepoys', were becoming familiar with the handling of modern European weapons.

Late in the evening, when the blackness of approaching night spread over the town, the noise of war died away.

But it was not until the late hours of the night that the life of the active town was extinguished. And at last the government buildings also died down and the ceaseless coming and going of the officers, orderlies, paymasters and purveyers receded, the offices emptied and peace descended.

A summer's day of the year 1746 was drawing to its close. The dusty, penetratingly hot, heavy atmosphere gave way to a slight, nocturnal coolness. The completely exhausted city groaned in a leaden, unconscious sleep. Nowhere was there a light burning, nothing stirred, not a sound shook the air.

Only the guards patrolled before the gates and the sentries went up and down the redoubts and peered silently out into the darkness.

But intently as they watched and listened they failed to notice that a few paces away from the east gate someone was approaching the town. The rays of the rising moon caught the white of a gathered muslin gown. But the pale gleam was only visible for a few moments then shawl and sarong fell to the ground, quickly stripped off, and the light brown of the naked girl's body became completely undiscernible, merged in the dark yellow of the soil.

The Hindu girl glided swiftly along the edge of the moat, dived silently into the waters of the Arianacupan, swam to the other bank, climbed ashore and crept close to the wall. Her arms caught hold of the edge of an embrasure, drawing the slim figure, light as a feather, after them.

No one saw or heard the Hindu girl who glided through the streets of Pondicherry as completely hidden by the blackness of night as by the thickest clothes.

Jan-Begum awoke. A sound had reached her ear and penetrated to her consciousness. She sat up and listened. A gentle scratching was perceptible. With a silent, sure catspring she hurried to the window and opened the casement covered with gauze. A Malabarian word was whispered up to her, scarcely audibly murmured and a little roll of olles leaves tied together in a bundle were pushed into her fingers as she stretched out her hand. Jeanne waited with baited breath. After a few seconds she caught a distant rustle. Satisfied, she closed the window, pulled a thick curtain in front of it, struck a light and lit a candle.

She was just going to open the little roll of writing when, arrested by an idea, she refrained, laid the little roll on the table and crept to the door of the next room. She opened it and listened. The regular breathing of a sleeping man reached her ear.

She carefully crossed the threshold and in spite of the profound darkness which filled the room she moved surely

and without making a sound to the little table standing beside her husband's bed and opened the drawer. Here, as she knew, lay the portfolio containing the secret dispatches which Ananda's camel rider had brought from Arcot the evening before. Jeanne took this dispatch case with her.

A few seconds later she sat down at her table, unfolded the dispatches and unrolled the little bundle of olles.

Jeanne did not love Ananda. The trust which her husband put in the Indian hurt her. Why did not Joseph François rely entirely on her, his Jeanne, who devoted her life to the unveiling of India's secrets for him? A month ago she had spoken openly against the Indian. But Dupleix had answered, "What is the matter, child, he is clever, shrewd and reliable and every pair of eyes and ears which see and hear for us, widens our knowledge and increases our superior strength. — Fearful lest she should appear petty and narrow-minded, Jeanne had relapsed into silence. But in her heart dwelt the desire to outstrip the banyan, to supplant him by giving tangible and obvious proof of her superiority and if possible to disgrace him.

Would Marie Rose's message bring anything more important than Ananda's dispatches — that was the question which dominated Jeanne. If only that were so, she sighed and took the dispatch first to impress it upon her mind, sentence by sentence.

Then she read what Marie Rose had written. Translated into French out of the gibberish of characters and languages, the letter read as follows:

'My beloved Mama, honoured Jan-Begum, Madame la Gouverneuse!

I am happy to be able to send you important information. As you know, my dear Mother, my house is open to my and Pedro's friends day and night. If five guests leave, ten guests arrive. The fact that Mr. Ibn

Batuta, secretary and interpreter to Governor Morse is among them cannot possibly surprise anybody.

When Governor Morse heard about Father's tremendous preparations he immediately sent Councillor Crommelin to Arcot and intervened. Anwar ed Din Khan informed the councillor that he would ensure that the French kept the neutrality which he demanded and preserved peace but said that he was annoyed and indignant at the fact that the English navy was constantly seizing French merchant ships and even capturing Indian ships suspected of carrying French goods. (I do not think I am mistaken in recognising the clever words of my step-father in this superb answer.) According to my authority, Councillor Crommelin told the Nabob in reply that the English men-of-war were under the direct command of the British sovereign and received no instructions from Governor Morse. At that the Nabob declared literally, "On my territory all Europeans must obey my decrees. If the British fleet disregards my orders the town of Madras will have to pay the penalty." This is the report which Councillor Crommelin brought back from Arcot'.

Jan-Begum nodded in satisfaction. Once more she compared the two documents. Ananda's report agreed almost word for word with that of Marie Rose. But the Indian added the following sentence to his dispatch: -

"This is my advice:

March, Sahib, and conquer Madras. Anwar ed Din Khan will not prevent you. He is counting on the fact that Your Divinity will hand over the town with all war materials and goods, to him.

Jan-Begum wrinkled her forehead. Ananda's advice reached a definite decision. Marie Rose's letter lacked any such conclusion. Annoyed, Jeanne once more picked up her daughter's letter to read it to the end. But the further she went, the more her face brightened, for at the point where the merchant's report came to an end, Marie Rose's

letter produced a number of new observations and important facts of whose existence the banyan, who was now in Arcot, could have no knowledge. Marie Rose went on:

'Dramatic scenes took place in the High Council of Madras. The councillors accused Governor Morse of being as naive as a child and neglecting to take such precautions as were essential in India at the moment. The Nabob's reply would certainly have been different if Morse had not refused to provide his messengers with gifts and bribes for Anwar ed Din Khan. Morse pleaded moral grounds and this gave rise to laughter as well as renewed attacks. As far as I can judge the position from here the Nabob will not prevent my step-father from completing his mobilisation. Crommelin appears to have shown anxiety regarding this mobilisation but to have received the answer that Anwar ed Din had not the slightest intention of forbidding the French military preparations provided that the weapons were not used to attack Madras. — The fact that Anwar's first reply in no way coincides with this second one has not yet occurred to the worthy English.

But now for the most important: Yesterday the English fleet sailed past Madras and headed for Bengal. That has caused utter despair here. It was very funny. I went for a walk along the walls with Pedro. All the councillors and officers were standing on the bastions pulling long faces as they watched the fleet sail away. Morse observed the departure through a telescope. Crommelin was cursing. But the funniest was Hornby, the fat councillor about whom I told you in my last letter. He kept shouting that he did not want to fall a captive to the French.

At a hurriedly arranged meeting of the High Council, Morse was implored to put the fortress in a state of defence and to raise troops. Morse refused. He said that the Nabob's promise of peace made expensive preparations superfluous. At that one of the councillors attacked him, called him over-trusting and reminded him that Cromwell's

blood flowed in the veins of the Morses and asked him whether he would not prove himself worthy of his ancestor. There was a great tumult. It must have been similar to that time in the High Council in Pondicherry when M. Dupleix led his Council by the nose. But here in Madras, they have no Dupleix.

My respected and beloved Mother, please assure my step-father of my absolute devotion. With love and kisses from

Your obedient daughter,
Marie Rose'.

Delighted, Jan-Begum snatched the palm leaf to her mouth and kissed her daughter's name. Mingled with her pride in her child was her triumph over the victory won by her little private spy service over the her husband's official, large and costly machinery. Once more Jeanne would be of more use to her Joseph François than the highly paid, highly esteemed M. Ananda Ranga Pilai. This thought made the woman happy and this happiness mingled curiously with the feeling of love for her husband, increasing and inflaming that love.

She hurriedly seized a pen and jotted down a translation of the letter in French. She worked indefatigably. When the candle had burned down she put a new one in. When her report had been translated and commented, she folded it up, sealed it and addressed it as follows:

'Little Jeanne offers this report to her great Joseph François in the hope of serving him and as a token of her friendship and love.'

Then she blew out the candle, laid the letter at the top of the dispatch case and carried the portfolio back to its place.

But this time her movements were remarkably unsteady. She knocked against the table twice and was so clumsy that Joseph François awoke . . .

As Jeanne returned to her couch the first gleams of sunrise were finding their way through the gaps in the curtains and the distant rolling of drums and blaring of trumpets penetrated into the blissful haziness of her consciousness.

While the noise of war was rumbling through the streets of Pondicherry, Dupleix was secretly adding to his wide-spread nets for which Jan-Begum and Ananda Pilai were spinning their unbreakable threads.

Paradis joined these two faithful souls as a third helper. He worked for the Governor openly and before the eyes of all, letting himself be called his favourite and used and mis-used for all those missions which M. Dupleix wished to carry out in broad daylight.

Nearly every day Monsieur and Madame Dupleix received the captain's reports.

"The town is delighted by Your Excellence's precautions", he informed them exultantly.

"And what do they think about the peace just declared by Anwar ed Din Khan?"

"They regard Anwar ed Din's declaration of peace as one of Your Excellence's ruses. Captain de Bury expressed himself in the following words which I repeat with all due deference, 'This peace is nothing but one of Dupleix' dodges. I'll be damned and enlist as a recruit with the sepoy's if this devilish idea ever sprang from that darned Anwar. Dupleix has saved France again. And the Nabob won't care a damn if Dupleix breaks this peace ...'"

The Governor glanced at Jan-Begum with a grin. "No fool, Captain de Bury ..."

"... at any rate cleverer than the English," replied Jeanne making it clear that it was thanks to her that they had this knowledge.

Paradis continued, "Nobody overlooks your share in France's favourable position in India, M. le Gouverneur. De Bury's words imply all the greater praise since, as you

know, this gentleman is by no means one of our friends. He worships La Bourdonnais."

"And La Bourdonnais' opinion?"

"The Admiral has told me haughtily several times that the English fleet must first be annihilated, until then, all land operations would be useless piece-work."

"He's not mistaken there," agreed Dupleix. And pleased, he added: "Inform the Admiral that the English fleet left Madras a few days ago and went towards Bengal."

Paradis jumped up. Amazement and delight appeared on his face. "How do you know ..." he stammered. Dupleix looked at him kindly. The young man's immense astonishment amused the Governor. He answered with a gesture which spoke more clearly than any words could have done and which more or less implied, "Who in the world can achieve such miracles except her, Jan-Begum, the cleverest of women." Paradis understood the gesture, it fanned his enthusiasm to a fresh flame. He stumbled towards Jeanne and kissed her hand. Then he stood up and said hesitatingly, "If I tell La Bourdonnais that the English fleet has disappeared he will march on Madras at once and conquer it."

Jeanne joined in the discussion, "Why shouldn't he? Let us give him full authority, my dear Paris! Care will be taken that this conquest is turned to our advantage not his."

"Let us act on Madame's sagacity!" decided Dupleix. "I will summon the High Council and prepare the appropriate resolutions. You, my dear Paris, will take part in the expedition as my representative ..."

The doors flew open; two lines were formed by servants bearing fans and, with a white wig on her head and wearing a white brocade farthingale trimmed with lace Maria Françoise Xavier Vincens, Madame's youngest child, the little eight year old Chonchon walked past the brown men.

Little Chonchon's cheeks were glowing, her eyes were gleaming, her expression and bearing indicated that she was conscious of being of no small worth and importance.

With a polite courtsey Chonchon greeted her step-father and kissed his hand. Then she went to her mother, bobbed down into her white crinoline, reappeared again and kissed her mother, who bent low, on both cheeks. M. Paradis was also awarded a dignified courtsey.

The Genevese decided that it was time to withdraw. He had already reached the door when the Governor called after him, "One thing more, captain: when La Bourdonnais conquers Madras I appoint you as Governor of the city."

Then Paradis turned to Jan-Begum and cried, "I wish it were I who would conquer Madras and I could lay it at Madame's feet."

The door closed.

"He is a good lad," Jeanne asserted but her words lacked warmth.

"It is touching the way he loves you," added Dupleix and there was real feeling in his words. Then he turned to the child, "Sit down, Chonchon, my child, and tell me about the important mission in which you took part for France today. Madame has informed me about your task."

"Oh, it was wonderful," cried Chonchon enthusiastically. "All the walls were hung with tapestry and there were pearl curtains in front of the windows; on the coloured floor lay beautifully embroidered cushions, great heaps of them. The whole harem, just one splendour!"

"And did you carry out your mother's instructions?" The child answered in the affirmative. Her face became serious as she now reported, "My servants spread out the Indian muslin, the silver bangles and the Persian copper bowls filled with sweets, in front of Madame Chanda Begum. I was allowed to sit next to Madame. Since I couldn't cross my legs in this dress they brought a stool for me. Just think, a stool! Such as only the duchesses at court

get! Then some actors came and performed a shadow play. A white muslin screen was stretched out with a great many lights at the back of it and men and animals appeared on the screen and they sang and talked . . .”

The child's lively and graphic account filled the room with the glamour which is diffused by the radiant eyes of children.

“Some day you shall tell me the story to the end, Chonchon dear. Then we shall write a report, which may be presented to his Royal Majesty, to bring the merits of little Xavier Vincens to his notice. But there is time for all that. First I must know what reply Madame Chanda-Begum sends us.”

“There is the reply,” said Chonchon, drawing a note from her dress and handing it over to her mother. “The messenger has returned from Satarah. The Mahrattas will restore poor Chanda-Begum's husband to her if we pay 700,000 rupees ransom,” she reported, “and you will pay the money, Papa, won't you? You will!”

Jan-Begum read the letter aloud. In it there was a great deal about Chanda Sahib and his qualifications for the part which Madame intended him to play. The beginning of the letter read:

‘I found the Sahib reading the memoirs of the Prince of Condé. Showing me the book, he said that he never let a day pass without reading some of this excellent work which gave him the chance of occupying his time in captivity with his beloved French language. Chanda Sahib did not miss a single opportunity of expressing his devotion to France, to His Majesty and to Your Excellence. If Your Excellence will pay the 700,000 rupees for him he will in fact guarantee to assemble the twenty thousand soldiers promised by his wife, within a few months and to lead them into the field against that man whom he hates from the very depths of his heart . . .’

Dupleix received the message with delight. First he

thanked Chonchon, kissed her, spoke to her kindly and promised her lovely presents. Then he led her out to her servants.

When he returned, he drew Jan-Begum towards him on the sofa. For a long time the husband and wife sat together and discussed what they called their great game. If Madras fell and was annexed then the mechanism would come into action whose wheels and levers they had so zealously forged and put together piece by piece and which they intended to raise to the highest summit. With intelligent, eager words they built their castle in the air, the most magnificent imaginable for men of this world. Again and again Dupleix expressed his joy and admiration and his thanks for the incomparable help which Jeanne had given him. Without a word, not resisting but not surrendering she let his homage flow over her. He did not seem to notice her passiveness.

At last she said, "Your feelings suit the comrade and friend. Meanwhile you have forgotten that there is another little Jeanne and that this Jeanne is a woman and nothing but that."

Dupleix was taken aback. He had not omitted signs of affection. Could she have misunderstood his tenderness, she who yet read his thoughts so well?

Jeanne put her arm round her husband's neck. "I should very much like to know what you expect from your wife. Tell me that, enumerate them! A friend? Am I that?"

Dupleix nodded in bewilderment.

"A comrade?"

The Governor hurriedly agreed.

"A lover?"

He folded her in his arms and kissed her mouth.

"Is that all?"

He stared in front of him in amazement. She looked at him and had to laugh at his perplexed and confused face.

"Is that all?" she repeated, "can you think of nothing else?"

"Nothing!" he cried with emphasis, "nothing at all! You are perfect! There is nothing more which you could be, become or give me! You are everything to me and you cannot give me more than everything; I cannot possess you more than completely."

"Wrong! There is something more!"

Joseph François did not recognise his wife. What had happened to her? Had she suddenly become romantic? Had she discovered a gap in their relationship? Was she seeing ghosts?

"He is so clever, my great Joseph François, my Grand Mogul and Emperor of India, and yet the simplest thing doesn't occur to him! Do you want to become Emperor, Joseph François?"

Dupleix opened his mouth.

"Say 'yes'!" she ordered.

"Alright, yes!" he replied, hesitatingly.

"Then you must have a dauphin! You silly boy, you! What a silly boy, wants to become Emperor and still doesn't know that an Emperor must have a dauphin!"

And softly she added, "And you shall have one, Joseph François, you shall have your dauphin!"

"Fate must have great things in store for me since it has refused my request," these were the words which Clive had squeezed from his lips in the deciding hour of his life.

It was another Clive who wandered through the hot streets of Madras, in the height of summer 1746, a proud young man with faith in the future. If he was starving he laughed – the days of starvation and deprivation would soon come to an end. The more his clothes fell to pieces, the more erectly did he wear the rags. Since he could no longer pay a barber he let the hair grow on his face, and

with a borrowed pair of scissors trimmed it to a long, thin, pointed beard such as the merchants wore.

Thus he strolled through the streets of Madras, which had altered no less than he himself, and observed, outwardly calm but inwardly filled with eager expectations, how the flurried settlement was shaken backwards and forwards, seized with the unrest of vigorous military preparations and filled with a feverish anxiety.

The merchants had suspended trade, the warehouses lay closed, the offices were deserted.

Driven by a whim, Clive entered the barracks in which he had worked for over a year with so little result. Now the office lay empty, the ledgers had been removed, the dust had accumulated thickly on the desks.

Now nobody insisted that Bob Clive should appear punctually at work, that he should keep his mouth shut and respect antiquated privileges.

Preparations were going on everywhere. The ditches were deepened, the walls widened, the palisades increased, gabions were hung out and filled with earth. Ever since the fleet had sailed away Morse had been working for all he was worth to put the fort in as good a state of defence as possible.

"Crommelin is urging Morse to arm," it was reported in the club, "the Governor himself would prefer to rely on Anwar ed Din Khan and his local peace. I hope he is not mistaken." It was generally doubted that the French would keep to the Nabob's stipulations.

"There's no point in defending ourselves anyway," declared Smith, "of all our officers, only Lieutenants de Morgan and de Gingens have ever been under fire, all the rest know as much about war as I do."

"Do you know the latest, boys?" Robertson reported to the listening clerks who, freed from service, now passed the live long day lounging about in the club and spent their time playing cards and gossiping, "Morse wants to bring

the wealthy Benfield to account. Benfield had the contract for the troops and falsified the accounts."

"Ibn Batuta himself, Morse's secretary, recently shook his head and said to me: 'Those whom God curses He sends to Madras!' The Hindu is the most cunning scoundrel in Southern India when he says such things!"

Clive drew Maskelyne away with him.

"The bore me to death with their tittle-tattle", said Bob.

"Why on earth don't they put us into red coats and make soldiers of us?" asked Maskelyne lightly.

He did not expect any answer to this question, threw the words out without giving them much thought, without taking the possibility into serious consideration. One didn't become a soldier; a respectable man avoided this profession. One put the rabble in uniform. That was so everywhere. At the most one became an officer. In France several noblemen served as officers, also in Prussia. In England the sons of good families disdained to wear the red coat. True, there were sons of lords and baronets in a few regiments of the Guards. But even they did not like to be seen in uniform when off duty.

In Clive the casually uttered words struck root. To become a soldier ... that might extricate him from all his difficulties at the moment. There he would get a whole coat on his back, be fed and receive pay. There was something in that. Without thinking any further he announced in a firm tone, as one speaks when a matter is settled and decided: "I shall apply at once. Perhaps they can make use of me. The garrison is weak; they will accept every man they can get hold of." With that he made straight for the government buildings. His pace became faster and faster, he became more and more convinced that he had found a way out of all his difficulties. They had called him 'Robber Clive' in Market Drayton. What had he done? Obtained what he wanted: apples and pennies. Now his bare life was at stake, his very existence, now he had a chance of keeping

himself alive until the appearance of the great things promised him by fate.

Clive stood before Lieutenant de Gingens and made his request. The old warrior, tried in battle, laughed: "We were just waiting for you civilians! By the time we have drilled you into shape the war will be over ..."

"And my willingness, an open mind, sound limbs, and a fiery courage, are they nothing?"

"The knights and troubadours used to commend themselves with these characteristics five hundred years ago. Drill makes a soldier, young man, You stick to the pen. The sword is meant for ..."

"... convicts, vagabonds and bullies, Lieutenant! For, after all you draw your recruits from these circles."

"You must talk to the War Ministry in London about that. Besides I'm busy." The Lieutenant turned to his work.

"Snubbed," pouted Clive when he stood in the square again.

"Probably de Gingens is right," replied Maskelyne, pulling the lace ruffles straight at his wrist. "After all, it's true - a respectable man doesn't become a soldier. And so far as I know that is so in all armies, not only in India, in Europe as well."

In silence they set off back to the club.

It was not the first 'no' that Clive had received in his life. But it was the first which he had accepted calmly. "Supposing I were to try off my own bat?" he suggested, "one could get hold of a weapon and take up a position at an empty embrasure."

Maskelyne shrugged his shoulders. He declined to discuss such a senseless proposal.

Suddenly Clive stood still and pointed across the square. "Just look, Edmund, how the gentlemen of the High Council are behaving! They are running about like scared chickens! Just look at Mr. Hornby rushing across the

square! Well, sir, where are their 'proud litters? Where are their crowds of servants, the punka-bearers, those representatives of their position? Edmund, do you notice the expression of perplexity and bewilderment on his face? Look at him carefully, such are the expressions of our councillors when they enter the Government . . ."

"And they come out again just as bewildered and perplexed".

"Besides, I don't for a moment believe that it is fear of war which has upset Mr. Hornby's bearing so completely. He's much more worried by the fact that he can't find anybody to bribe him now. For up to today he has lived by exchanging his virtue for gold and silver. Now not even this article will tempt anybody any more."

"The only one who behaves like a man is Crommelin; he takes an interest in the fortifications and helps Morse from dawn till dusk. And afterwards he goes for a walk along the walls with his Indian wife and his half-caste children just as in peace time."

When they were back in their corner of the club, Clive brought the conversation back to de Gingens and his reply.

"It's so stupid, only to make the worst men into soldiers! The great writers speak quite differently about soldiery. Who was it who said: War is the father of all things?"

"Heraclitus . . ."

"And Plutarch and Livy, Arrian and Thucydides, of all the knowledge they contain this is the first. And not one of them says that drill makes a soldier. I can't prove it but I feel quite sure of it."

"Do you want to run the gauntlet? Discipline is inseparable from soldiery", protested Maskelyne.

"Inseparable perhaps, or rather certainly. But it is not decisive. I cannot believe that soldiery is different from other things. You need imagination as in every profession.

Even the merchant requires imagination. Alexander invented the slanting battle line. It was a product of his imagination. If de Gingens had been right, Alexander would have kept to the rules he learnt from his father, Philip, and would never have conquered Asia."

"Alexander! A genius! A King who commanded great lands and mighty armies! Here it is a case of three hundred men who will be led by lieutenants and at the very best you can become an ensign and not even that, as you have heard."

"Not to know anything! Not to have learnt anything!" For the first time in his life Clive felt his lack of knowledge. What could his teachers have given him? He had hated them in those days; now he was far removed from them, lived in another world and never regretted them for a moment. But those simple, honest men could not have taught him anything which would help to solve the problems of everyday life, to cope with himself and the world. They had not even trained him as a good clerk . . .

Again he had reached the thought of all thoughts in India. He ought to take it for granted that fate would soon give him the promised greatness by means of trade. He possessed a bill of exchange which would be cashed. He could rely on his destiny.

And yet the thoughts kept on returning! He drove them away but they came back. Lieutenant de Gingens must be wrong! Clive's common sense told him that. And he had faith in his own intelligence. True, human intelligence did not reach very far but all the same it was the only thing to which one could cling. If one wanted to move a heavy stone one took a lever to it; one did not need to learn that, one knew it; one did not have to think about it for a moment; this knowledge had been in the sinuous curves of the brain for hundreds of thousands of years, handed down by an unending line of ancestors. Could it be otherwise with fighting, with warfare, with soldiery? Something

within him revolted against Lieutenant de Gingens and his assertion.

Maskelyne had also followed the train of thought further. "Besides warfare is an art, not a handicraft," he remarked.

The final word had been said. Clive was exultant. "Then I am right! Imagination and common sense make the soldier! What is art except imagination in invention and common sense in carrying it out?"

"But army regulations, knowledge of weapons, tactics — that must be learnt all the same!"

"I shall learn it then," cried Clive with conviction. "War shall be the first thing I learn in my life."

"Well, I shall soon believe you're crazy," Maskelyne ended the discussion.

In August the first French troops arrived in front of Madras. The town was so well armed that it was able to defend itself successfully against the besiegers for several weeks.

At the beginning of September the outlook changed. The French fleet came into line. Nine men-of-war bristling with cannons cast anchor in the roads. Without the defenders being able to prevent it, a great deal of war material was unshipped and a whole army of infantry, sepoy, armed sailors and black navvies were landed.

Eleven heavy mortars were dragged to the two hills from which the town could be commanded. These were put into position and entrenched.

Clive remained at the fortifications day and night, observing closely all the measures taken by the besiegers. He soon realised that the French were proceeding in accordance with a well-thought-out plan. He watched the movements of the infantry and marvelled at the appearance

of ten companies of Indian soldiers who were trained exactly like European ones and carried on operations side by side with them.

Anxious to understand the significance of each of the operations, Clive turned to the officers and sergeants whenever he found the opportunity and enquired into motives and reasons. And again and again he heard words of approbation for the opponent's procedure.

"You can see La Bourdonnais' brain. You realise that he is a great general," Councillor Crommelin asserted.

"And Anwar ed Din Khan, will he attack and relieve Madras?" asked Clive. "I hear that Governor Morse promises that the Nabob's army will save us?"

The councillor walked away without replying. Clive understood.

He continued his round. What better thing could he have done? Just as he had wanted to get to know the nautical manœuvres on the 'King George' and had taken an interest in the fittings of the ship so he now busied himself with soldiery and warfare.

His head and his heart were more deeply interested in and more strongly attracted by it than he himself realised. That was because of its intrinsic connection with power. It roused the tendency towards violence which he had felt since his earliest youth. For him war was the organised application and the systematically trained manifestation of this violence. Thus he absorbed military knowledge by imitation.

When the first cannon balls fell in the trenches the citizens disappeared from the walls and streets. Clive remained. Without thinking of sleep, food or drink he ran from bastion to bastion in order to procure the most complete impression possible of all the proceedings. Several times cannon balls landed close beside him and he was in danger of being trapped by falling palisades. But he did

not let it disturb him. The pact which he had formed still held good.

For three days and three nights La Bourdonnais bombarded the town. His guns were so skilfully arranged that they could reduce the town walls to ruins without being reached by the English batteries. All Morse's attempts to improve his position by means of sallies failed. From whichever side and at whatever time the English troops made a sortie, superior French forces rushed against them.

On the fourth day, Clive witnessed the surrender.

Morse sent officers into the enemy camp, bearing the flag of truce. They returned with the news that in the event of their surrender La Bourdonnais would give them a chance to purchase its freedom with a suitable ransom.

Under these circumstances Morse decided in favour of capitulation.

Accompanied by the undaunted Crommelin he walked to the Water Tower and handed over the keys of the town to La Bourdonnais' envoys.

On the following morning, the Admiral entered Fort St. George.

It was an illustrious company of well-dressed, carefully coifured knights and great gentlemen, who filled the council chamber of the High Council of Madras, accompanied by servants and secretaries. Now that the decision had been taken the English busied themselves with justifying their reputation as good losers. They displayed their finest clothes, their most costly lace, an abundance of diamonds and pearls. For a moment one might have imagined oneself back in the happy, golden days of past months and years. The gentlemen stared in front of them with expressionless faces, exchanging a word now and then, anxiously concerned not to reveal the slightest sign of perturbation. The wealthy Benfield and the noble Crommelin even laughed

together once or twice but it sounded forced and laboured. Hornby was perspiring and fully occupied with puffing and blowing.

"I saw it coming," he groaned, "I haven't had another minute's peace since Dupleix became governor of Pondicherry."

Accompanied by Lieutenants de Morgan and de Gingens, followed by his secretary and interpreter, the Hindu, Ibn Batuta and surrounded by an army of servants, Governor Morse entered the room, bowed and walked to the lower end of the table. Here he took his seat at the narrow end opposite to his old president's chair. The two officers sat next to him.

French commands echoed up from the street. A few minutes later the doors flew open, spurs jingled, swords rattled and with firm steps Admiral Bertrand François Mahé de la Bourdonnais strode into the room. — The greeting ceremony was so thin and formal on both sides that it might have been called impolite. The Admiral was followed by Captain Paradis and apart from him — no one. No adjutants, no secretaries, no scribes, no servants accompanied the two soldiers.

Now La Bourdonnais took the president's chair. Round his neck he wore the triple golden chain with the long white and red cross, the badge of the commanders and knights of the Christian Order of His Holy Majesty of Portugal, and on his breast was the silver star with the red burning heart which belonged to it. Otherwise there was no ornament on his uniform. There he stood, every inch a soldier, broad, thick-set, with glowing eyes and black hair, a child of Brittany from top to toe.

Certainly nobody noticed how similar in type this world-famous admiral was to the little outcast clerk, who, like him of Gallic blood, showed the same blackness of hair, the same breadth of shoulders, the same glowing eyes. The latter was not present at this historical moment of the

surrender of the greatest Anglo-Indian possession but he was standing with the citizens of the town in the square outside the government buildings interestedly watching the French infantry companies which were lined up here and were standing with their legs wide apart and their weapons levelled, busily terrifying a population which even without these exertions would not have dared to offer the slightest resistance.

Upstairs La Bourdonnais' deep firm voice rang through the council chamber. "I will read the conditions of the surrender out to you," announced the Admiral in an absolutely matter of fact tone without the slightest expression of joy or triumph, "which, as I emphasise, are laid down by me and not by the supreme Governor General of the French administration, M. Dupleix. I should also like to advise you to accept my proposals and not to give anybody the opportunity of hardening the conditions named by me otherwise the negotiations might be considerably prolonged."

"Whereas in the event of our immediate acceptance we should have a guarantee against subsequent demands?" asked Mr. Crommelin.

"The concluded treaty binds those who sign it. — The first condition of surrender reads: The town shall remain in the possession of the French army until the ransom is paid. Then it shall only be returned to the representatives of the British sovereign after these have formally bound themselves not to undertake any of the usual attacks on the representatives of the French troops. The details of the obligations imposed upon the town of Madras are as follows: All the merchandise belonging to the Company shall be handed over to the French authorities. The total value of the goods in Madras is estimated at £ 130,000 in addition to which the amount in gold and silver comes to the value of £ 31,000."

Startled, Crommelin looked at Morse. "How have the French obtained these figures?" his glance asked.

Jourdain also became attentive, shook his head and whispered across the table: "Extraordinary, the figures are correct!"

"They are absolutely correct," replied Benfield.

Meanwhile La Bourdonnais continued: "The value of your artillery, the pieces as well as the ammunition supplies, we estimate at £ 48,000. Half of this, to the value of £ 24,000, is to be handed over to us. Private property remains untouched. The second condition concerns the war contribution which I settle at £ 440,000."

This figure caused a groan.

"It is impossible to raise such an extraordinarily large sum!" declared Morse. His councillors agreed with him.

La Bourdonnais remained unshaken: "Do not forget that you have only to deal with me for the time being. If you do not accept my conditions M. Duplex will name his."

"Anything but that," cried Mr. Hornby, "we will fulfil any conditions provided that you do not deliver us up to the hatred of M. Duplex."

"Then you must pay £ 440,000," La Bourdonnais retorted dryly.

The Englishmen put their heads together and whispered. At last Governor Morse announced: "We will try to raise this sum but we need time."

"How long do you need?"

"We will pay £ 240,000 in six instalments within four months and give bills on London for a further £ 200,000."

"Agreed."

At this point M. Paradis joined in. "But we must keep possession of the town during the time that the payments are being made. Also hostages must be given."

"Whom do you demand?"

"Governor Morse will offer himself as a hostage for the carrying out of the treaty."

"That is impossible! We should be without a leader!" cried the councillors.

"Then Madame Morse must take up residence in Pondicherry in her husband's place. At the same time we undertake – it is unnecessary to emphasise this – to afford Madame Morse the most respectful and solicitous treatment she could desire."

Morse bowed his head. "I am a widower. I could offer you my two children as hostages," he said softly.

"I accept your offer," Paradis went on. "Furthermore all the representatives of the English sovereignty, whose servants you are, must undertake to refrain from all attacks on French troops and French property for the duration of the war. The documents concerning this will be handed to each of you for signature."

"May I take the gentlemen's silence for agreement?" asked La Bourdonnais.

Governor Morse again bowed his head.

"I declare that we have come to an agreement. I welcome this because it saves me the necessity of having to annex the town finally and permanently to France."

"In this circumstance alone," announced Morse, "do I see the justification for the surrender of the town. Otherwise I should have preferred to die on the walls of Madras."

"We may take it for granted that you will vacate the town immediately after the payment has been made, Admiral?" asked Crommelin.

"I repeat my assurance," declared La Bourdonnais. "Since I may now regard the treaty as settled, will the councillors please sign the ransom agreement which I have drawn up."

After Governor Morse had read the treaty aloud word for word, the councillors signed the document in turn.

La Bourdonnais handed the writing to Paradis and announced: "By order of His Excellence the Governor,

M. Dupleix, I appoint you, Captain Paradis, as Governor of the fortress of Madras which remains in French possession until the agreed sums have been paid. A force of twelve hundred regulars and nine hundred armed sailors is at the disposal of Captain Paradis. The meeting is closed."

As the councillors stepped out into the square their glance fell on the flagpole which, erected opposite Government House, towered above all the buildings in the town.

The Union Jack was just being hauled down and the fleur-de-lis was rising above the fortress of Madras.

Dupleix stretched out his arm. La Bourdonnais approached. But whereas the Governor put his arm round the visitor the latter only laid his hands gently on Dupleix' shoulders.

"I congratulate you, Admiral, I congratulate France and I congratulate myself on having such a commander!"

The Admiral stepped back. Dupleix did not show that he had noticed the marked reticence of the other. As he offered La Bourdonnais a seat he continued his enthusiastic speech: "Your ransom agreement has come to my knowledge, Admiral. I admire the document, which does credit to your foresight but . . ." Dupleix paused.

La Bourdonnais crossed his legs, laid his sword on his knees and covered it with his hands, determined not to save the other a word.

"... but," Dupleix went on, "I cannot possibly accept this agreement."

"You will have to accept it!"

"Let us avoid discussions on jurisdiction, Admiral."

"Madras is my conquest. I have made the treaty and am therefore bound to keep to the conditions which I myself have laid down."

"But I am the governor of all French possessions in India ..."

"... with the exception of the islands of Mauritius and Bourbon. We will not deceive one another, Dupleix. The fact that His Majesty entrusted these islands to my protection brought me your enmity."

Dupleix shook his head.

La Bourdonnais was not to be deterred. "Yes, yes, Dupleix! Permit me to continue to call you simply by your name. I have not forgotten the time when we were very humble, not to say very poor, boys. But then I became Governor of Mauritius and Bourbon and very much against my will that brought me your enmity. But it did not bring you mine."

"I, too, think of the days we spent together with great pleasure and I assure you that you are mistaken, Admiral. My letters should have shown you that."

"Let us leave words, written and spoken. Judge my feelings by my actions. The ransom agreement holds good."

"I must have Madras completely."

"But be reasonable, Dupleix, we don't need Madras. It is enough that we have taken it."

"Taken it? — Although you want to ensure that private property is respected!"

"We are not highwaymen!"

"No, but we are in a state of war and are destroying the enemy."

"I have destroyed it, to the best of my knowledge ... the enemy, that is their army. The private property of peaceful citizens is sacred."

"There are precedents in history."

"Not in that of France."

"In that of France as well! All is fair in war. When the late Louis considered it necessary he razed the Palatinate to the ground."

"I am no Mélic. But I am determined and prepared to conquer all the remaining English possessions."

"England only retains control of Fort St. David on the Coromandel coast. It will be conquered. But through the operations of land troops. Paradis remains my commander."

"But I am not under your command, Dupleix. Since I have independant command over the fleet, I have control of the employment of these soldiers on land. It was these troops, which ..."

Dupleix nodded, smiling. "Certainly they were your troops and it was your genius which led these troops to victory. But since you have once taken Madras it is now French property and I am the Governor of all French possessions in India. Hence the fate of the French fortress of Madras lies in my hands. It is subject to me alone and I shall dispose of it as I think fit."

La Bourdonnais jumped up. Without the slightest sign of irritation he said calmly, clearly aiming at external politeness: "His Majesty has expressly forbidden me to bring English territory into French possession. His Majesty's will is shown in the words: The Company must carry on trade not make military conquests. My patriotism will not suffer the interests of the King and the nation to be sacrificed to any private interests."

"Private interests?" shouted Dupleix. "How dare you attribute private interests to me?"

"I was not speaking about you but about private interests in general," retorted La Bourdonnais sharply.

"I hereby declare to you, Admiral, that the orders which I have from the King are unknown to you. According to these orders I am entitled to hold Madras. That is my final word."

La Bourdonnais bowed curtly and left the room.

Dupleix watched him, smiling. "He is only a little giant, this cur!" he murmured, "he can't even lie properly!" Then he rang the bell. As he lit his pipe he dictated a

warrant to young Jacques François Vincens, his secretary, according to which the Royal Admiral, M. Bertrand François Mahé de la Bourdonnais was to be arrested at once and to be brought to Pondicherry dead or alive.

"This warrant is to be handed over to Captain d'Auteuil and put into immediate effect," ordered Dupleix. Then he took a ready prepared document out of the dispatch case and handed it over to Vincens: "Here are the instructions for Captain Paradis, declaring the ransom agreement null and void and ordering the immediate taking over of the fortress of Madras into the final possession of France. Despatch a camel rider to deliver this document to Governor Paradis to be put into practice immediately."

Two hands were laid on Dupleix' shoulders and stroked his cheeks soothingly.

"Don't be over-hasty, Joseph François," Jan-Begum whispered in his ear.

The Governor stood up and greeted his wife.

"Carry out your father's instructions, Jacques dear," Jeanne ordered her son.

When the young man had left the room, Jan-Begum drew her husband to her in the way she had. The two sat down on the sofa.

"You want to tear up the ransom treaty, want to annex Madras for France?" Jan-Begum began. "This decision is wise and right and I can only commend it. But in Paris people will cry: Dupleix has broken the international law; down with him; to the Bastille! They will keep the town but they will punish those who obtained the town for France. And there is no role in which I have less desire to see my Joseph François than that of a scape-goat . . ."

"But what am I to do then? If I return Madras I shall never be able to expel the English from India!" Dupleix said, wavering. "What shall I do then?" he cried, and she noticed how troubled his words sounded.

"The ransom agreement will be torn up but not by you – not by Dupleix, the Governor!"

Dupleix began to understand. "By the High Council then?"

Jan-Begum agreed. "Certainly by the High Council! And it must be done unanimously! You are sure of your councillors, Joseph François?"

"Certainly, darling, I am successful and success kills opposition. Even M. Miron no longer dares to oppose one of my motions. So I will propose in the High Council at once ..."

"You won't propose anything! You will only carry out. You are the Governor, an executive organ, and you will do neither more nor less than the High Council decrees."

Dupleix agreed enthusiastically. "Of course, you are right. How blind I am!" he cried, his words tumbling over one another, "why did I have my nephew Aumont, why did I have our brother-in-law Saint-Paul, elected to the High Council? One of them will propose the motion! And the Governor, he simply agrees, carries out the decision and ..."

"... and washes his hands of the affair!"

Again M. Dupleix overwhelmed his clever wife with words of praise, admiration and love. She could scarcely escape from his enthusiasm and affection.

"I have not yet finished, darling," she said when he finally let her speak. "Even a decree of the High Council does not provide an adequate security. People might say that the Governor had agreed to the decision and had thereby assisted it. But I want Dupleix to be compelled by his supreme court of appeal to annex Madras in defiance of the international law and the treaty which has been formed. We are acting a comedy – let us act it to the end! Do not let us forget the important part which the chorus plays on the stage of politics just as it does on that of the

theatre. And so I tell you: Don't only summon the High Council; call all the citizens of Pondicherry together. If the people demand that the ransom agreement should be torn up then the Governor ought not to protest! He may express his views but he will yield!"

"And then if they raise a hue and cry about the violation of international law M. Dupleix will have done nothing but his duty!" the Governor concluded the discourse. "And now I must beg you to leave me, Madame; M. Ananda Ranga Pilai is waiting to inform me about the events in Arcot."

"May God overwhelm Your Divinity with His grace!" With this remarkable paradox the Hindu greeted his master. "The important tasks which Your Divinity's admirable genius has achieved will always be blessed by the gods. What would La Bourdonnais, that cur . . ." – the Hindu spat – "... what would he have achieved without Your Divinity's genius and help? Nothing! Did I not prophecy that your Divinity would conquer the Golden City?"

Without interruption the Hindu continued his praises for two whole hours as he later observed drily in his diary. At last he brought the conversation to the subject of his visit. "The Nabob was furious when he learned that Your Divinity did not intend to hand Madras over to him. He said that that was the coolest political swindle he had come across in the hundred and three years of his life. Indeed, he seems to have got an inkling of the fact that Your Excellence only offered him Madras so that he would not give the English any help during the siege. He raised his hands to Heaven and swore: "I will take the town of Madras from these French as quickly as they took it from the English!" – And at the same time he sent for his eldest

son, Mahfuz Khan, to set out with all the cavalry and to take Madras by force. Now Mahfuz Khan is moving towards Madras with ten thousand cavalry . . .”

“A courier at once . . .” Dupleix seized the bell-pull but the Hindu signed to him not to: “I made my way via Madras and informed M. Paradis of the attack which was threatening him.”

“Ananda, you are a gem!” Dupleix cried enthusiastically. “My God, then Paradis is in imminent danger! I must recall La Bourdonnais. The Admiral must set out for Madras with the fleet at once.”

“Captain Paradis sends word to Your Divinity that he has fortified the town so thoroughly that he has no need to fear an attack. He can hold it for the next few weeks.”

“My Paradis!” said the Governor, delighted, “the good fellow knows that I am supporting him.” He dropped his voice: “I shall indulge in bribery again . . .”

“I know, M. le Gouverneur, you love this game.”

“This is only the minor game, Ananda. To outwit and bribe old Anwar – child’s play. There are other moves . . .”

The Hindu nodded: “Madame went to Chanda-Begum . . .”

“You’re a brick, Ananda, a genius at putting two and two together! You save me the trouble of having to explain things. You will ride to Satarah and pay the ransom for Chanda Sahib – seven hundred thousand rupees.”

“Seven hundred thousand rupees – that is seventy thousand pounds. This gigantic sum as a ransom for the future Nabob of Arcot . . .” He shook his head. No, he was no genius at putting two and two together for he did not understand that . . . or Dupleix was making a mistake. But did His Divinity ever make mistakes?

While the Governor was counting out the sack of silver coins on the table, the Hindu thought things over. He only needed to consider who else was taking part in the game. If it was not only a question of the Carnatic but of the

Deccan, of the whole of southern India, then indeed no sum was too great. "Muzaffar?" he asked in a whisper, "the young Muzaffar?" Dupleix nodded.

The roles were assigned, M. Aumont had learnt his part well and recited it still better; M. Dupleix had protested and finally, since the High Council decided in favour of the annulment of the ransom agreement at the urgent recommendation of M. Saint-Paul, he gave way. To appease his conscience M. Dupleix had demanded that the people should be called together.

Then heralds had gone through the town and had summoned the citizens together in the square in front of the government buildings.

The Governor was just about to leave the house when Captain d'Auteuil burst in. He announced excitedly: "La Bourdonnais has just embarked for a long voyage. I hurried after him in a sloop thinking I might be able to tempt him out of the boat by a ruse. But he saw through it, laughed at me, rambled on about breaking the international law and infamous deeds in which he did not wish to take any part, maintained that he had to save his honour ..."

"Did he tell you where he was sailing to?"

"He would stay for a short time in Mauritius and proceed at once to France."

"And the money? The first instalment of the ransom which has already been paid – one hundred and twenty thousand pounds?"

"He has taken with him. He will hand the money over to M. Orry in Paris. He said he had conquered the town of Madras for France, that these one hundred and twenty thousand pounds were the price of the return of the town and that they must therefore be delivered to the Finance Minister. He anticipated that the Minister would order the release of the town."

Furious, Dupleix rushed to the door, tore it open, called for his secretary, ran back, raced across the room and feverishly considered how he could parry the thrust. When Vincens entered the room Dupleix had already formed a plan.

He dictated a copious letter to the Finance Minister, Orry, in which, with all the eloquence at his disposal, he observed that La Bourdonnais had betrayed France and the Company and that he had failed to destroy the English fleet. After Paradis had conquered the town of Madras, La Bourdonnais, presumably bribed by the English, had turned upon the victor ...

Without any difficulty Dupleix brought forward a dozen serious accusations and, in spite of his haste, formulated them in clear, demonstrative sentences which could not fail to convince an impartial reader. He concluded his work of destruction with a last fatal blow which was so cunning that a parry seemed impossible. He dictated:

"From the town of Madras M. La Bourdonnais has seized money to the value of four hundred and forty thousand pounds. He has taken this on the 'Neptune' with him. Judging by the hints which he dropped I can only assume that he intends to embezzle this money. Presumably he will convey part of the sum to the Finance Ministry in order to be able to retain the rest for himself with all the more security ..."

When he had finished this he took the ransom agreement and went onto the balcony of the house to talk to the people of Pondicherry.

What a sight presented itself to M. Dupleix! The councillors were addressing the citizens with wild gesticulations and making it clear to them that M. La Bourdonnais' ransom agreement was a crime against the honour and prosperity of France and that this infamous treaty ought to be destroyed.

The crowd roared their approval. There was not a citizen of Pondicherry who did not raise his hand as a sign that he agreed with demands of the councillors.

M. Dupleix was greeted with cheers. After such thorough preparation his task should be easy. He spoke:

"My dear and honoured councillors, merchants and citizens of the town of Pondicherry do you insist that I should annul the ransom agreement?"

Again the crowd roared their agreement.

Then M. Dupleix took the document, held it up in the air so that even the very last citizen of Pondicherry could see it, tore the treaty in half and threw the two pieces of paper on the ground.

And the citizens of Pondicherry fought for the scraps, tore them into tiny fragments amid enthusiastic yells and trod them underfoot.

When the noise died down, M. La Farelle went onto the steps and, waving his hat, shouted: "Long live His Excellence the Governor, M. Dupleix, the defender of France!"

"Long live the Governor!" Three times the cry thundered across the square.

M. Dupleix bowed in acknowledgement. As a sign of the deep emotion caused by the honour he laid his hand on his heart, and that expression of deprecation arising from inner modesty which the mob so loves in its heroes, appeared on his face as he cried with a shaking voice: "I thank you, gentlemen for the honour which you accord me and which I have not deserved. If we honour anyone at this hour, our homage can only be rendered to His Most Christian Majesty, our gracious King Louis. Long live the King!"

Once more the cheers of the crowd roared across the square. But to his great satisfaction M. Dupleix observed that the ovations for the King proved far less than those intended for him.

With the cry: "Now we shall complete our victory. I order the attack on Fort St. David, the last possession of the English Company in India," he re-entered the house.

Drummers went through Madras and summoned the inhabitants together in the square. Town criers threatened with immediate imprisonment every European who dared to refuse to appear. From all the houses, from the churches, from the club, they came; merchants and clerks, men, women and children, gathered together as they were ordered.

At last the hundred people had assembled. There they stood side by side: Morse, the Governor, the councillors Crommelin, Hornby and Benfield, the Reverend Fordyce, the clerks Maskelyne, Robertsen, Dick Stone, Smith and Clive.

Clive also noticed Ibn Batuta, Morse's interpreter and secretary. The Hindu was staring in front of him with a face like stone.

The freemen inhabitants had appeared in full force. Among them was Don Pedro Coyle de Barneval with his wife, Marie Rose. Not far from these two, a one-armed beggar was sitting in the sand playing with his wooden plate.

The roll of the drums became ever louder, the blare of the trumpets ever shriller as the columns of infantry marched along and surrounded the square on all four sides.

The mortars arrived and fired their salute in honour of M. Paradis who appeared with his officers, crossed the square and mounted the steps of the government buildings.

He took up his position under the canopy. In faithful imitation of the method employed by his teacher and master, he had the dispatch case containing the document handed to him, had it opened and without touching the

paper read out the manifesto which settled the fate of the town and its inhabitants.

The words struck the people of Madras in the face like blows. Every sentence which Paradis uttered represented a breach of international law, every word, a looting of the property, a wounding of the honour of those who had submitted to the express and binding promise of M. La Bourdonnais but who would never have been prepared to suffer voluntarily such ignominy.

Captain Paradis declared the fundamental conditions on which the ransom agreement rested and according to which the town would be set free again after the payment of the ransom, null and void, and all private property confiscated.

Everything which the inhabitants possessed in the form of merchandise, provisions, ammunition and cattle passed to the ownership of France. Nothing remained to the subjects of the British royal Sovereign except what they possessed in the way of clothes. Only the women were permitted to retain their personal ornaments.

Then orders were given that the Governor and the councillors should immediately surrender themselves as prisoners to the French. For their own safety – for their own safety, mind you – they would be conveyed to Pondicherry.

All male inhabitants were to present themselves to the government in the course of the day and there to swear a solemn oath of homage to the Most Christian King of France and to give their word of honour that they would not undertake any acts of hostility against France.

A groan of horror broke out.

It covered the words which Marie Rose whispered in her husband's ear: "That is Father's language."

Yes, it was the language of M. Dupleix which rang in the ears of the inhabitants of Madras.

Again the drums rolled, the trumpets blared and the tramping of troops rumbled as they marched away.

Madras had ceased to be an English town.

With bowed heads, the citizens left the square of the town in which their fathers had lived for over a hundred years.

Clive looked up. Ibn Batuta was just making a wide circuit anxiously taking care not to touch any of the unbelievers.

But curiously enough the interpreter stopped right in front of the one-armed beggar and spoke to the crouching man. The latter raised his head and replied. Clive could not understand the words since they both spoke Malabarish. But for some reason or other this meeting of the two Indians struck him and impressed itself on his memory.

The clerks had set off on the way back. Clive noticed that he alone had remained behind. He roused himself from his thoughts. Now they were supposed to go and pay homage to the French King . . . That should not, that *would* not happen! Full of determination he hurried after his fellow-clerks. "Come to me! This evening when it's dark, come to me, boys!" he whispered in their ears, "let's forget all differences and all personal enmities and join together for deliberation."

When the little gathering had assembled in Clive's miserable room and had taken possession of the stool, bed and table, Clive poured out the indignation from his heart. "Do you want to give your word of honour? Do you want to pay homage to the King of France? Boys, let's take to our heels! Tonight we'll get over the palisades, swim the moats, crawl over the hills and march day and night till we reach St. David."

"We shall be recognised and captured," one or two objected.

"We shall be thrown into prison, to the rats and mice in the dark dungeons," others added.

"They won't dare to do that," shouted Clive.

"Rubbish! After the French have violated the ransom treaty, after such a breach of international law, after such

a villainous act, we must be prepared for any crime! And so I say: We can't risk it; The town is guarded; we shall be seized, perhaps shot."

"I shall stay," said little Stone quietly. "I belong here; my father lived in Madras; my grandfather traded here. And my Hindu girl lives in the Black Town. I shall stay here. I belong here like the cat to the house."

"Which of you will follow me?" asked Clive, keeping his self-control with difficulty.

Maskelyne, Robertsen and Smith shouted their "Ayes".

"Right, we four. This evening at ten o'clock we'll meet at the hillocks. Get your servants to give you Indian clothes. Then you won't be recognised. And it's easier to walk when we have a hundred miles to go to Fort St. David."

With a smile, Clive picked up the clothes he had just taken off, turned them this way and that and studied their holes and tears. "In Fort St. David I shall soon find someone who will give me clothes," he cried happily.

"Perhaps it would be better if you packed the suit, Bob. Who knows whether you won't get a worse one in St. David?"

"Impossible! There isn't one," cried Clive in a tone of absolute conviction, "in the whole of India there is no coat which surpasses this in shabbiness." With that he threw coat, waist-coat and trousers into the corner and set about winding his servant's turban round his head. Next he wrapped the sarong, the loin cloth, four times round his body in the usual way, threw the shawl round his shoulders, drew the ends under his armpits and folded them together crosswise on his chest. Then he slipped into a pair of pointed Spanish leather slippers with long, curved tips and now looked exactly like an Indian man of the Mogul's tribe.

"Heavens, Bob," Maskelyne exclaimed, "no one who

sees you in this muslin bandage can possibly take you for an Englishman. The dark hair, the beard, the brown skin . . .”

“So the free days with their bathes and walks in the sun and above all the impossibility of paying a barber have been some good. — But now we will deal with your things, Edmund, and pack as much as we can carry . . .”

The two friends went into Maskelyne’s room. Edmund raked together his precious books, letters and oddments and handed them to Clive who packed them in a bundle. He also handed him a little picture, a miniature, painted on wood.

When Clive’s glance fell on the painting, he started and went nearer to the candle. He stood for a long time, staring at the picture, which represented a girl of about thirteen. Out of a well-proportioned face two, narrow, light grey, clear, almost transparent eyes looked enquiringly and searchingly at young Clive, who, arrested by this keen expression, was wondering from what depths the child’s curiously mature and thoughtful glance arose. And Clive was surprised that he was able to withstand this glance without being completely uprooted. Then he discovered the long, dark lashes fringing the crystal clear eyes, the graceful brows, the wealth of dark blond, unpowdered curls which framed the high forehead and softened all the severity. The little nose, the delicately curved lips together with the brows, lashes and hair, struck a chord whose sweet loveliness was harmoniously resolved by the high forehead and the serious eyes.

In amazement, Edmund watched the dark glow which spread over his friend’s face and the strange, mournful glimmer burning in his eyes.

“Who is that?” asked Clive.

“That is my sister?” the young man said, simply.

“Your sister?” cried Clive aloud, showing how pleased he was to hear this reply, “I was afraid that . . .”

"What?"

"... it might well have been ... the picture of a girl that you had brought with you from Europe ..."

"it is my favourite sister," said Edmund reaching out his hand to take the picture.

But Clive took a step back. "Let me keep the portrait!" he managed to utter fiercely.

"What do you mean, Bob? Give me back the picture and never mind this silliness ..."

"Silliness? How dare you ..." Clive's hands closed on the picture, the expression on his face revealed the fact that he would defy all force and defend the miniature against all attacks, that he would shrink from nothing and would kill or die rather than give way. There was the old Bob of Market Drayton, Robber Bob, before whom the tradesmen trembled. And Maskelyne also hesitated in face of the dangerous determination, the raving of this heart, the deluge of an overwhelming emotion submerging all the feelings of a controlling judgement.

But then the man in Maskelyne arose, the stag which assails those of its own sex because there is a female in the game. He came quite close to his menacing and darkly gleaming friend: "I insist on your giving me back the picture." Two pairs of eyes bored into one another; muscles were taunted.

But Edmund's strength melted before the blazing fire of the golden brown eyes and he sought refuge in the vacuum of exhortations and appeals to reason and reflexion. "I am your friend, Bob," he whispered, "your only friend. Do you want to hurt me, to offend me? You have nobody but me ..."

Then Clive's arms went up in the air and folded themselves firmly round Maskelyne's shoulders while Clive, Robber Clive, collapsed on his friend's breast. Bewildered and helpless the friend let it happen.

Clive got up slowly. With difficulty he recovered con-

trol of himself. At last he said quietly: "This . . . girl . . . will be . . . my . . . wife . . ." And before the hurt Maskelyne could open his lips and express his disapproval of this eccentric idea, Clive addressed him: "You have no right to speak for your sister – to contradict her. I looked at this picture, I glanced into these eyes, observed these lips, and this face came to life for me, these eyes moved though they are painted eyes, these lids, painted lids, were raised and lowered, these lips opened and spoke to me. The answer was given long ago. I have this girl's word . . ." And suddenly he began to pour out his words at a tremendous speed and to speak wildly: "She was thirteen when you left England; you spent half a year at sea; you arrived in Madras half a year before me. A year has passed since then, so she is now . . . fifteen?"

Edmund nodded in speechless amazement.

"We write in November 1746, in eight days we shall be in St. David, a ship sails for England before Christmas, let us allow six months for the voyage then my letter will arrive in London in July; she receives it, sets sail, travels across the sea for six months and reaches St. David for Christmas."

"You're mad!"

The words bubbled out of Clive irresistibly: "I shall find words which will reach her heart; her heart will answer and confirm what her picture has promised me. She will read my letter and will recognise me in every word, in every syllable; she will understand me, will be the first person who really understands me. Surely, surely it will be so. She will leave everything, the house in which she was born, the street, the town, her brothers and sisters, will go to the port . . . I see her walking . . . will embark on the ship and will arrive. Father and mother will not be able to detain her. Every resistance will only convince her the more firmly that she has found her destiny. And I? – I shall build her a house, I shall work, I shall resign myself to the

stupid regulations of a ridiculous employment; I shall serve Mr. Hornby or another baboon; I shall bear the unbearable for her sake ... for her sake ... I shall make her happy, wait on her hand and foot; I shall become rich, lay the treasures of India at her feet; she shall sway along the streets of India in litters; a hundred servants shall fan her ..."

With the picture pressed to his brow he broke down. When he recovered, the expression of violent emotion which had made him look like a madman, had disappeared, the dark gleam of the eyes had died down, the quivering of the lips faded away. He unclasped his hands. His face became serene. He raised his head and asked: "By the way, Edmund, what's her name?" And his dry tone revealed the fact that he was fully aware of the humour of the situation.

"Margaret," answered Edmund. He had to laugh in spite of himself.

Bob raised his eyes, looked out of the window, stepped up to the aperture, flung open the gauze, leaned out and gazed at the sky. Its arch was black and starless. The cheers and yells of the plundering troops echoed across from St. George.

"Come, Edmund, we must go ... to St. David", he said, wrapping a gauze veil round the miniature and tying the cloth and its contents to his upper arm. Then he seized his friend's bundle, extinguished the candles, went to the door and feeling his way forward on tiptoe, step by step, made his way towards the palisades of Madras.

When the friends had surmounted the rampart, wall and moat and reached the narrow alleys of the Black City, darkness and stillness enveloped them. They walked along in silence. Anyone who saw them thus must have taken them for natives making their way home by night. They reached the rampart of the Black City at the foot of which lay the houses of the banyans. As they were scrambling up the rampart, singing arose. From the lighted window of

a villa a Moorish song sounded, accompanied by the strumming of a lute:

Oh, welcome, thou, the love-sent messenger;
No messenger was e'er so dear to me;
From her thou com'st, and living, hast seen her
Whom I, alas, have yearned so long to see.

Anwar's host was really charging along to avenge Dupleix' treachery. At their head, clad in his armour and mounted on an elephant equipped for war, was Mahfuz Khan, the Nabob's son. Near St. Thomé the procession turned aside from the road and prepared for battle since, in the distance, across the plain, stood the enemy.

A thousand Indian cavalry formed a line; ten such lines set off at a gallop and tore along towards the thin line of skirmishers with hanging bridles, lances in rest and gleaming swords ready to hand. After a few minutes the flat country was hidden in dust; the sand rose skywards in mighty clouds carried by the hot air, condensed to an impenetrable wall and, swift as the wind, this wall approached the hostile little group of four hundred and fifty infantrymen and a thousand sepoy.

Who could hope to withstand this terrible foe, this mass enemy invincible since time immemorial? The result seemed certain. In a few minutes the towering wall of dust would have swirled against the glacis of Madras and the little cluster of European warriors would lie trampled in the dust, crushed by the invisible attacking host of Asia.

But Paradis, France's youthful commander, of Swiss descent, the man of twenty-five who a year before was still sitting in the office as an ordinary clerk and had only been wearing uniform for a few months – he was on his guard. The art of warfare, which he had never learnt, lay in his blood. He had arranged the cannons in such a way that they remained hidden behind trees and bushes and

placed the rows of riflemen close to the camouflaged batteries in loose formation. He had to contrive to keep a firm hold on the artillerymen, as well as the riflemen, up to the very last second. The French must not be tempted into premature action either by military enthusiasm or by fear.

Once thrown into confusion and checked in their course, that host of cavalymen accustomed to victory must yield to the terror of headlong flight. A single shock would suffice to win the battle.

The fantastically bold venture proved successful. Paradis kept control over his men and did not fire a volley until they were at a distance of less than two hundred paces. It is true that only seventy Indians were killed but it had the desired effect. The unexpectedly late but simultaneously fired shots sufficed to throw the remaining nine thousand nine hundred and thirty Indians into confusion.

Paradis immediately changed over to a bayonet attack. This second charge drove the surprised Indians to flight and that permanently.

Mahfuz Khan who was leading the charge on an elephant, with the colours beside him, was carried away in the general flight and by turning his back on the enemy gave the signal for a general rout.

A tremendous booty in the form of animals, tents, arms, provisions and all kinds of objects fell into the hands of the victors. For it was one of the customs of the Indian army never to go into the field without a huge quantity of baggage.

Thus Captain Paradis won the battle of Thomé and saved Madras for France.

This battle brought to maturity two important theories whose utilisation decided the fate of India for the next hundred years.

First, proof was given that the better arming, organisation and leadership, of the European troops outweighed the numerical superiority of the native Indian army. The charm was broken. If people had hitherto believed that they had always to obey the commands of the Indian princes, from now on they could hope to oppose them in the field with some prospect of success.

But the battle of St. Thomé also justified Dupleix' idea of using Indian soldiers against Indians. Here, for the first time, the sepoy fought side by side with the European regulars, withstood the attack like them, kept well under the control of their officers and did not fire until they were ordered to do so.

Henceforward the sepoy was never again to disappear from the battle-fields of India.

Thirsting for honour, greedy for triumphs, insatiable in his desire to display the symbols of his victories, Joseph François Dupleix gave the town of Pondicherry a celebration such as no European town in India had hitherto witnessed.

In front of Government House was erected a canopy under which stood two thrones. Here, at his wife's side, the Governor received the triumphal procession of the victors.

Fifty thousand spectators lined the streets from the gate of the fortress to the government building of Pondicherry.

At the head of his troops, Paradis approached. The victorious general was followed by the prisoners from Madras. The mortified descendent of the terrible Oliver Cromwell suffered the disgrace of seeing his hands bound with clanking chains. So he passed, a walking symbol of the crime of his credulity and the shamelessness with which the victor had broken his word. Next to Morse walked his

councillors. These were followed by Ibn Batuta, the secretary and interpreter. Thus not even the traitor was lacking in the procession of the victor and the betrayed and captured losers. In the distance, the captured guns and the waggons laden with all kinds of booty swayed along in an immense line.

The public rejoicing lasted for three days and nights.

There was no end to the fireworks, illuminations, salutes of guns and torchlight processions. Fresh hoards of congratulators were continually overwhelming M. Dupleix and his lovely wife with delighted tirades of exuberant panegyrics.

On the fourth morning, Captain Paradis sounded the signal for marching. "Now we shall throw the English right out of India," he shouted to his regulars. Then, with seventeen hundred infantry, a thousand sepoy, six cannons and six mortars he set off towards the south to conquer the last stronghold of the English.

In the following night Jan-Begum received Ibn Batuta. For a long time she whispered to the Hindu. Then the latter left Pondicherry in the role of a prisoner of war who had fled in secret, and, provided with many instructions and a handsome little purse full of pearls and diamonds, he set off towards St. David.

Shaken by violent fevers, Jeanne kept to her bed. With all the strength of her indomitable will she fought against the sickness. The doctor and midwife did not leave her bedside.

Joseph François Dupleix walked restlessly up and down his study. Jan-Begum's groans forced their way continually through the door. Hour after hour the Governor waited. As he walked, his shadow danced over the gilded furniture and the silken hangings.

At last the candles went out and the blackness of night filled the room. But in front of Dupleix' eyes it was light. The future lay glittering before him. How near he saw

himself to the fulfilment of his hopes! In a few days St. David would be conquered. In a few weeks the thrones of the Carnatic and the Deccan would rock, and India would lie at the feet of its French conqueror.

Dupleix saw himself sitting on the throne of Delhi with Jan-Begum on his right, Empress of India. On his left would stand the boy who was to occupy the throne after him.

As the Indian sun burst in powerfully and swiftly through the window and the visions which shine brightest at night faded before the brilliance of the dawning day, the midwife brought the father his new-born child. Joseph François held the eagerly awaited dauphin in his arms.

But before the first cannon shots thundered against the palisades of St. David, the hope which had so radiantly filled the parent's hearts was extinguished. The youngest pretender to the imperial throne of India left this world on the very day on which he entered it.

One after another they appeared in the St. David's club: the councillor, Crommelin, the lieutenants, de Morgan and de Gingens, a few corporals and sergeants, the Reverend Fordyce and the clerks, Robertsen, Smith, Maskelyne and Clive. They had all got over the palisades of Madras by night and fog and had pushed their way through rice fields and bamboo thickets to the Fort, their last place of refuge.

Ibn Batuta also appeared a day later, ostensibly having fled from captivity in Pondicherry and he reported on the battle of St. Thomé and the triumphal procession. Employee of the Company that he was, he again offered his services, and Governor Saunders, not suspecting any harm, included him in his staff as interpreter and secretary.

If the settlement had hitherto been under the control of Madras it now became the English capital in southern India. Governor Saunders formed a High Council and as the senior representative of the Company took over the supreme command. He also reinstated the employees who had

escaped from Madras in their rights and duties. For all that, there was no question of putting any trading activity into practice.

Nobody was more inconsolable about this than Bob Clive. He who had hated the office as much as anyone, now longed to work, to make progress and to reach a goal which he had once despised. The glance into the eyes of Margaret Maskelyne's portrait had transformed and influenced him for the third time in his life.

But to what extent can personal experiences alter a human being? And especially a young man carved out of such hard wood, governed by such burning passions and who, moreover, was on such unusual terms with his destiny! For not only was the pact with Death still valid but the promise of a speedy change for the better was also still in force. It was true that in the meanwhile fate was still playing against Clive as usual. In a whimsical mood it had robbed him of his last threadbare clothes and had literally set him down naked in the strange and not altogether friendly world. True, people passed over the fact of his dismissal from Madras in calm silence and gave him clothes and silver coins, thereby saddling his claims to the already meagre salary. But where was there any sign of hope? Nowhere!

Nevertheless Clive dared to write to the unknown Margaret Maskelyne and to ask her whether she would risk the voyage across the oceans and become the wife of a poverty-stricken, starving clerk who lived in a strange town threatened by war and bore in his heart the uncertain hope of attaining, after the passage of many years, the longed-for right which could make him into an enormously rich man . . . if fate so willed. But it must be willing! The belief that this imaginary obligation would be respected gave the youth the strength to write this letter, to seek convincing words and to find expressions which seemed calculated to bring about the desired result.

And Edmund Maskelyne, the brother? He, deeply rooted in the conceptions of respectable citizenship, felt with an extraordinarily fine perception what force there was behind this unusual, apparently distracted, not to say insane clerk, what a will was hidden in this sullen head, what strength of resistance was concealed in this massive frame. Defeated, he gave way to the will of the stronger, this incomparable, unique apparition, assured his sister of his friend's worth in moving words and recommended the satisfaction of the remarkable request.

Thus the courier ship which left St. David at the beginning of December 1746 took two letters for Margaret Maskelyne to London with it.

Apart from the composition of these letters there was really nothing to do which was worth the trouble. It is true that St. David offered a luxuriant nature and a wealth of sceneric charms and the fort itself proved to be narrowly limited so far as space was concerned but excellently fortified. But even the study of the most delightful beauties of nature and the most interesting fortifications was finally exhausted.

"Let us play since we are not allowed to work!" cried Clive and for the first time in his life he sat down at the card table to multiply or lose the few shillings which he possessed.

Smith, the expert player, regarded the new opponent as a certain victim.

For Clive was now sitting there, letting his glance wander inquiringly backwards and forwards between the pictures which were hung up and his partner's eyes. He played without any pleasure. As a gambler for the favour and disfavour of fate, a gambler with life and death, he was prepared to risk everything – everything. But the foolish replies which the cards gave to the foolish questions he had to ask them, bored him. Yet the monotony of life without work and set tasks bored him still more. So he

used the game as a modest training for his memory and a practice for the ability of his thoughts to connect and to separate with lightning speed and thus to combine.

He zealously noticed how many aces and kings fell in the course of each game and calculated what his partner would do in the given circumstances.

Suddenly he started. A card fell . . . Was he mistaken? He had already seen this picture a little while before. His eyes bored into those of his opponent. Smith calmly went on playing. Clive lost.

A new game began. Clive strained his memory to the utmost.

When the same card appeared for the second time, 'Robber' Clive threw his cards down on the table and roared out: "You're cheating, Smith. You're a damned swindler!" His words boomed through the room like mortar shots.

Smith jumped up, red in the face, clenched his fists and rushed at Clive. The latter parried the blow and turned to attack. The clerks hurriedly rose from the other tables and ran up to separate their two comrades who were pitting their strength against one another in a regular boxing match.

"Satisfaction! I demand satisfaction!" stormed Smith.

"You shall have it," retorted Clive, "bring pistols. Come into the garden. March. We won't waste any time!" and he rushed out and round the house to reach the garden enclosed between the walls of the club, government building and fort.

On the green lawn they faced one another, raised the pistols and waited for the seconds' command.

The fact that attack is the best method of defence lay in the blood of the aggressive Clive. The command had scarcely been fully uttered before Clive's pistol cracked. The shot missed fire. Furious, Bob flung the pistol down on the ground. Then, without turning a hair, he faced his

enemy, who was carefully preparing to take aim at his opponent's forehead.

Some feeling prevented the clerk, Smith, from firing the pistol and adding murder to robbery but then another feeling urged him to overcome this embarrassment and to strengthen his courage for crime with bragging words. "Now I can make you cold, Clive," he cried whipping himself up, "do you see my hand? It doesn't tremble! Now I bend my fingers; soon I shall press; soon the bullet will shatter your brain. Now speak: Am I still a damned swindler?"

"Say no, Bob!" intreated Maskelyne, for he saw from the adversary's features that Smith was determined to go to extremes.

"Leave me alone, Edmund!" Involuntarily Clive signed to his friend to go away. Then he turned round, offering the full width of his brow to his opponent and walked slowly up to him until his head touched the mouth of the pistol. The barrel pressed cold and sharp-edged against his hot forehead. What he did then was nothing but the repetition of a previously learned lesson. He laid his hands behind his back and cried: "To all eternity you remain a damned swindler! What I have said I have said. And now, fire!"

Pallid horror seized their companions. With drawn faces they watched the curious scene.

The two antagonists kept their glances firmly fixed on one another. The flashes which shot from Clive's eyes shattered the rock of courage in his opponent's heart. The latter tried convulsively to bend his fingers and fire the pistol. But his nerves refused the task. He dropped his arms; the pistol fell. "A crank, a madman, an absolute fool!" he cried drawing back. And he left the circle of spectators.

"A madman, Smith is right," somebody murmured here, "really this Clive is crazy," agreed another there. And

slanting looks fell on Clive from under drooping lids – the looks of irritated, horrified men who are mystified and overawed by one who can look death in the face without trembling, yea, who summons him with provocative words where they would have begged humbly for their lives.

The much discussed incident was soon overshadowed by a greater one.

"The French are coming," the pickets shouted in the early morning of December 9 as they rushed through the gate into the fortress and ran to the Commander.

Since the fortress was prepared for an attack, moreover, since all precautions had been taken in good time, a trumpet signal sufficed to summon the garrison to their appointed places.

The news reached the Governor in the club. He left the room of the élite and entered the hall where the clerks were discussing the exciting news.

"If any of you would like to become soldiers will they step forward," said Saunders.

Instantly a broad, black-haired youth stepped in front of the Governor and cried: "I want to become a soldier."

"What are you called?" asked Saunders.

Clive gave his name.

"Oh, are you the crazy fellow I've heard about? You're not afraid of pistols, eh?"

"Nor of cannons and muskets, sir."

"But bravery alone doesn't make a soldier."

"I know! Imagination makes generals. Courage is enough for the ensign."

"Indeed? Ensign? You can write, eh?"

"So far with ink, from now on with blood."

"You're taken on. Report at the barracks."

"My friend as well? Worth more than I am, sir. You should take him, mathematician's son and knows a lot about angles, the right angle for the attack and the dead

angle for the defence. Engineers or artillery would be his line."

"Is your comrade deaf and dumb or are you his guardian?"

"I'm his friend. I'm speaking for him because I happen to be talking. On another occasion he spoke for me when I needed his intercession ..." And Clive looked across at Margaret's brother.

Edmund Maskelyne came up. Governor Saunders shook hands with them both.

They reported to the recruiting lieutenant on the spot. He showed no anxiety. "Not trained? Never mind; You have straight legs, my lads, broad chests and open minds that's enough to begin with."

Clive took the opportunity of getting a proper answer to the question which was consuming him. "And the lack of drill?"

"Drill? That is fear of one's corporals and therefore good for pressed men. Those who join voluntarily need time to learn the handwork. You are ensigns, gentlemen, concentrate on the orders!"

Thus Clive became an ensign in the second company of infantry.

Having at last become a soldier, the clerk, Robert Clive now wore a whole coat on his back and no longer needed to worry about food and drink. The long, black hair and the pointed beard fell under the scissors and a tie-wig with two evenly curled rolls surrounded the full, dark face, the brown of which contrasted strangely with the silvery white of the frame.

Clive's mental position remained at first the same. He was waiting for the greatness which fate had promised him and longing for the miracle with double force ever since he bore a woman's image in his heart. True this woman did not yet know anything about the existence of the clerk Clive and moreover months would pass before she learned

that he had become a soldier. Why should he not have volunteered? So long as the war lasted he would have been compelled to lounge idly about the club, occupied with nothing but the expectation of attaining trade by some miracle. So it was better to spend his time sensibly and usefully until the promised miracle appeared.

But apart from this trivial and simple reason, a deep mysterious instinct drove him towards soldiery. For it was no mere chance that his mind had been continually occupied with military questions ever since the possibility of becoming a soldier rose before him. Deep in his innermost soul slumbered the subconscious feeling that a real trading spirit requires a real military spirit if it is to be of any use. War, navigation and piracy are three in one – inseparable. Thus his development and life became symbolic of the evolution and perfecting of his country.

The transformation to a soldier was the fourth and deciding change in his life; it embraced all the previous ones and directed them towards the goal.

Even before the dawn of consciousness, the child had formed its pact with death and had brought the hostility of men and fate upon itself in consequence.

When the miss-firing pistol conveyed to the wretched clerk that he had so far been living under a delusion and that he was going towards a great future, there followed the second change.

The glimpse of Margaret Maskelyne's picture deepened his consciousness and showed him an aim and a direction. From now on Clive was dominated by the belief that he would find the promised good fortune in trading.

But the change to soldiery was the most significant of all. It led the man, Clive, in accordance with the primitive law by which the natural characteristics in everyone tend to increase in spite of his ultimate being. Clive was, and became more and more, the fighting trader which constitutes the Englishman in his essential character.

Like England, Clive wanted to carry on trade, and free from bureaucratic restrictions, to barter goods on his own initiative over land and sea.

In order to attain this end he had to become a soldier. So he strove towards a free soldiery unrestricted by drill.

What was and is England, if not this? From the desire to trade, the race of the Britons developed into the leading military nation in the world and at the same time the greatest conquering nation. There has not been a single year in its history in which it has not waged war in some corner of the earth with the one object of widening or protecting its trade. Earlier than any other nation in the world, the English realised that no trade is possible without war but also no war without trade – that war is carried on just as much with supplies of provisions and materials of all kinds, and so with money, as with the blood of soldiers. Thus there developed that peculiar kind of English readiness to face death which remains free from all heroism and that determination for victory which scrupulously avoids all idealistic glorification. The final aim remains the recognition of the fact that money is the foundation of physical and moral conduct in life, that wealth implies inner peace, leisure and devotion to the decisive factors in life – science, art and sport and last but not least, all the little pleasures which with supercilious irony were called ‘spleen’ in the happiest period ever enjoyed by a nation on this earth – the Victorian.

Such a passionate nature as Clive’s could only carry on trade and war ardently and sportingly. Had he been allowed to trade he would have thrown himself wholeheartedly and with all his strength into the exchange of wares. Since he was permitted to fight, he threw himself without reserve and with the full force of his personality into warfare. He now belonged to the team of St. David and it was entirely a matter of course for him to live, fight and die with this team out of the same sentiment for

which one fights with one's team in the Indian ball game — without thinking of 'gloire' and 'victoire', without shouting 'vive le roi', without organising triumphal processions and without giving free play to the ambitious dreams which were being dreamed a hundred miles to the north, in Pondicherry.

Anyone who is so whole-heartedly a soldier wants to know all that soldiery involves. Again Clive asked questions, wanted to solve tactical, mathematical and ballistic problems and to learn the theoretical reasons for the practical measures. According to the ancient military custom he never received satisfactory information. For the soldiers there were a limited number of rules which had to be kept without inquiring into the why and the wherefore. From the colonels downwards, the soldier had nothing to bother about except the carrying out of orders, and the more blindly he obeyed and the less he thought, the more highly was he valued. The discussion of reasons was left to the superiors who bore the responsibility.

But to carry out orders blindly was not after Clive's heart. As usual, as on the ship or in the office, the mysterious conviction lay within him that nothing in the world is so practical as a theory, provided that it is correct.

Since Clive had bound himself to defend the fortress of St. David his active nature demanded that he should carry out this defence with all his ability and strength. And so he stood side by side with his two hundred comrades, ready day and night to fight against the fivefold superior forces of the enemy. During the day, they had to ward off attacks and attempt sorties. By night there were sentries to be detailed off, advanced guards to be inspected and the weak earthworks of the Black Town, which was called Cuddalore, to be protected against surprise attacks with special attentiveness. Thus every hour was filled with new and varied soldiery.

While the swords were striking one another and the bullets whistling backwards and forwards under almond trees and palms in the gardens enclosed by the ramparts, the struggle for India between the two powers was also being carried on in its other two forms. The war was being waged in the dark, carried on by Jan-Begum and her spies without Governor Saunders and his men perceiving the invisible threads with which they were ensnared. For Ibn Batuta spied on the political and military measures and sowed distrust in the hearts of the natives. Then dancing girls, tradesmen and beggars glided through the bazaars of St. David and Cuddalore, delivered their special messages and took the answer with them, to convey it to Pondicherry.

But the war for the alliance of the Indian rulers was also making progress.

Saunders sat upstairs in his government building and held council with Hotschi Hoddi, his first interpreter and secretary, a Brahmin and therefore a man of the highest caste, a priest, a scribe and a diplomat of rank.

"Do not be careful with money, sir, as Mr. Morse was," advised the Indian, "only if you fling money out of the window in handfuls will the treasures of India flow to the gates of its fortress."

It was agreed that the Indian, Bunda Mutal, should be sent as an envoy to Arcot to deliver gifts and money to Anwar ed Din Khan and to appeal for his help for St. David.

In the 'darbar', the audience chamber of his fairy palace, Anwar ed Din Khan was sitting on his diamond-studded throne and looking down at Mahfuz Khan, his son, who had thrown himself at his feet. The vanquished general was begging forgiveness for his defeat at St. Thomé and offering to lay aside all his distinctions and honours, the standard with the emblem of the fish, the trimmings

of his robes, interwoven with gold – naked, he wanted to wander through the land as a fakir.

The hundred year old Nabob raised his son, graciously accorded him the solicited pardon and once more sent him into the field against Paradis. After all, Bunda Mutal had deposited considerable sums of English money in the treasure chamber.

So Mahfuz Khan rode against Paradis for the second time.

But faster than the Indian cavalry rode, flew the thoughts of Dupleix. Barely had Mahfuz Khan set foot in the gardens of St. David, when Dupleix' envoy approached him. His offer far exceeded the presents from the English to Anwar ed Din and proved that Dupleix' speed and generosity were unequalled in the whole of India.

Instead of assailing the French, Mahfuz Khan at the head of his army entered Pondicherry as an ally by the very street along which a few weeks before Captain Paradis had marched in triumph for having defeated this same Mahfuz Khan.

Fifty thousand rupees in bar gold and gifts to twice that value were accepted by Dupleix from the Moor. But at the same time the Governor whispered in Jan-Begum's ear the words: "This will be the last sacrifice that we make to Anwar ed Din and his son. Once we have taken St. David we don't need anything more from either of them ..."

"... except their throne!" replied Jan-Begum.

Thus Dupleix cleared the way for his general, Paradis, to storm England's last bulwark.

The tiny force of defenders offered a desperate resistance. Governor Saunders already believed that he had to count on the worst – after all, he was waiting until Mahfuz Khan, tired of the celebrations in Pondicherry,

should march up and make the besiegers fifty instead of five times as strong.

Then one morning, Admiral Griffin appeared in the roads of St. David with the Anglo-Indian fleet. Those ships which had once sailed past Madras to Bengal and had thus stirred up panic in the fortress, were returning. The mystery was unveiled – the fleet had at that time been disabled in the battles with La Bourdonnais and had gone to Calcutta where it had been repaired, freshly armed and freshly manned. A hundred infantrymen and the first sepoy (which the English had raised and trained on the Malabar coast, following Dupleix' example) were landed and presented to the defenders who were worn out with fatigue.

The English also woke up to political activity.

"Anwar ed Din is the vassal of the Nisam el Mulk," explained Hotschi Hoddi in the council of war which was held between Saunders and Griffin, "let us appeal to the old man in Aurengabad and summon him to our aid."

"But Nizam-al-Mulk and Anwar ed Din have been friends since their youth, their fathers stuck to one another through thick and thin," Saunders objected.

"He will turn against Anwar ed Din all the same, Sahib. Depict the old friendship binding him to the British royal Sovereign, depict the dangerous game the French are playing and remind him that the Nabob is only his tenant and he will relieve you of the burden."

As a result of the Brahmin's advice this letter was written to Nizam-al-Mulk:

Your Grace!

I, the undersigned, Commodore and plenipotentiary of His Majesty, the King of Great Britain, appeal to Your Grace with the request that you will protect the English settlements (which have always been obedient and submissive to you), from France and the Nabob of the Carnatic,

Anwar ed Din Khan, and that you will proclaim peace and order with the authority of your royal word.

I will not give your Grace a detailed account of all the robberies, cruelties and pillagings which have been inflicted upon the subjects of the British Sovereign by that insolent, faithless nation, the French, and which have been permitted and perpetrated by the subjects of the Nabob, Anwar ed Din Khan, that very Nabob whose duty it was to preserve peace in Your Grace's lands. Instead of this, the Nabob has sacrificed the interests of a nation with which Your Grace has lived in close friendship since time immemorial and through which not only the Carnatic but also the whole realm of the Grand Mogul has been enriched. Instead of helping us, the fortress of Madras has been allowed to be plundered by the French. We state this by way of information and entreat you to use your authority to make good the damage which we have so unjustly suffered. I take the liberty of informing you that the Nabob, who is, after all, only a tenant and a vassal, does not trouble himself in the slightest about the distress of the people in his province and never considers anything but his own advantage. The French are very generous with gifts at the expense of other people, young and old.

signed: Griffin, commodore.

With this letter, in which the style of Hotschi Hoddi was clearly perceptible, Bunda Mutal set off on his way to Nizam-al-Mulk in Aurengabad. The answer given by the Viceroy sounded favourable. Bunda Mutal was sent on to Anwar ed Din with a letter from Nizam in the latter's own hand. This answer has also been preserved. The gist of the letter is as follows:

"The English nation has been obedient and submissive to us for many years. It has always proved itself a faithful race and we condemn and regret the fact that it has been afflicted with unrest, adversity and devastation. I hereby instruct you to protect the English in every respect, to help

them and support them and to do your utmost to ensure that the French are severely punished and exterminated and that their harbours are returned to the British sovereignty and that the English nation are restored to their rights to establish themselves in their former places as before and reap the harvest of their trade and commerce.'

As a result of this exchange of letters Anwar ed Din Khan's army kept away from Fort St. David.

But the position of the English improved still more in the sequel. A ship from London cast anchor in the roads of St. David.

From this ship there descended a major, a real colossus of a man. Ten coolies were needed to lift Major Stringer Lawrence from the landing ship and drag him ashore. In this man, the English army had sent to St. David the most capable officer at their disposal. The stout Lawrence had fought in all the seats of war, in Gibraltar, in Flanders and at Fontenoy. Finally, shortly before he set sail, he had helped to win the victory at Culloden where Charles Stuart's claim to the English throne was finally and permanently repelled.

Now he came to the head of the garrison of St. David. Out of his mighty bull-dog's head, two small, light blue eyes beamed at the warriors and instilled enthusiasm, self-confidence and military zeal into them. No one would have thought this enormous, bigbellied man capable of the speed with which he rushed forwards. In this Falstaff's body there dwelt the fiery spirit of a Percy Hotspur. The full, red cheeks, the swelling double chin, the bulging neck, bore witness to an immense delight in sensual pleasures. But the high forehead and the eagle nose betrayed a sharp intelligence, a critical ability and a clever foresight.

The French were soon aware of the brain which was pitted against them from the ramparts of Fort St. David. When the land artillery combined with the cannons of the men-of-war, and the giant Lawrence threw himself against

the French at the head of his infantry, Paradis raised the siege and withdrew to Pondicherry.

Lawrence immediately went over to the attack. He let the men-of-war set sail for Madras and marched off with his infantry and artillery to reconquer the lost fort. In order not to waste his strength he decided to avoid Pondicherry. He went by roundabout ways through the jungle and on the evening of the first day encamped on the river Panner.

Only the second company with its hundred men, including the ensign Clive, remained in St. David as a garrison.

The fires had burnt out, the noise of the camp died away and only the steps of the sentinels going up and down and the soft cries of the pickets relieving one another broke the silence.

Major Lawrence lay in his tent, sleeping on a heap of palm leaves. It must have been about eleven o'clock when he was called. By the light of the torch he recognised the ensign from the second company. The latter saluted and gave his name.

"What do you want, Ensign?" asked the Major annoyed by the disturbance. "Why have you left St. David? A hundred men are a limited garrison and not a man can be spared. The risk of a surprise attack ..."

"That is just why I am here," interrupted the Ensign. "The French have got wind of your departure and are marching against St. David ..."

Lawrence jumped up. "How do you know that?"

"By chance! You had hardly marched away this morning when I went to Cuddalore and stood in front of a bazaar, without any set purpose ... Then I saw a beggar, a one-armed man, and noticed him whispering to a Hindu, that very Ibn Batuta, interpreter to the captive Morse ..."

"Why shouldn't a Hindu whisper to a beggar?"

"I saw these two once before ... in Madras ... the day that Captain Paradis annulled the ransom treaty in the square ... This beggar stuck in my mind. There may be a reason why Ibn Batuta is in St. David. He maintains that he has escaped from the French. But I thought to myself: 'What is the beggar doing here?' For a long time I have had the feeling that each of our movements is known to the enemy. Already in Madras, it often struck me. There was no sortie in which we did not stumble against the whole of the French force – they were always focussed just at the spot where we broke out. There was no weak point in the fortifications against which they had not massed their attack. When I expressed my suspicion I was laughed at and since then I have not enquired into the matter any further. All that occurred to me when I saw the beggar again. And I said to myself: 'Now is the time to get to the bottom of the affair!' Without making myself conspicuous, I followed the one-armed man and saw how he went straight to the road to Pondicherry. At the second rest-house a camel rider appeared. He spoke to the latter who mounted his beast and rode northwards at a furious speed. I ran straight back, got a horse and set off. Late in the afternoon I saw them approaching – two squadrons of dragoons. I led my horse into a thicket and let them pass. When the infantry followed, I knew for certain. They were advancing ten or twelve companies strong. For a mile I saw nothing but the blue of their coats. Then I set off on my way till I found you, Major!"

"And how did you manage to find me here in the jungle?"

"I was here once before, eighteen months ago, fleeing from Madras. I had to make the same detour through the bamboos then with my companions."

"That you found your way here, Ensign, is good. That you watched the beggar is better. But that you thought out

the significance of this blackguard's behaviour and immediately set off for Pondicherry and ascertained whether your calculation was right – that indicates more than usual smartness."

Clive bowed in acknowledgement of the appreciation. Then he went on: "If you hurry, Major, you can still catch the French early in the morning before they reach St. David."

Then Major Lawrence laughed all over his fat face, rolled his massive body up to Clive, laid his mighty paws on his shoulders, shook him and cried: "... they must reach St. David, my dear Ensign, the French gentlemen ..."

"I don't understand you, Major?"

"You're a wonderful fellow, Ensign, but far from being a soldier. What don't you understand?" We let the French go to St. David in peace ... we certainly don't disturb them – it would be a pity!"

And again he laughed loud and ringing as he caught sight of the young man's bewildered face and poked him in the chest with the knuckles of his fist, softly and gently as he thought but still so that the other flew against the side of the tent. "Don't you understand then? We shall have returned long before and will be sitting in the fort to receive the cunning Mr. Paradis in a fitting manner!"

Clive's face brightened. "A stratagem?"

"That's how it's done, Ensign."

"And yet you've only been in India a few weeks, Major!" Admiration was clearly expressed in Clive's words.

"The scenes of war change, the stratagems remain the same."

Clive became thoughtful. "But we are twenty miles away from St. David here, besides we shall have to make detours past the French, we shalln't get there till sunset ..."

Again the Major laid his hand on the young man's shoulder in a friendly way. His fat face, gleaming red in

the light of the torch, shone close in front of Clive's eyes. Emphatically he said: "Wars are won with legs, that is one of the three maxims known as tactics."

"And the other two?" Clive asked quickly, eagerly seizing the opportunity.

"I'll reveal them to you some other time. Now it's a question of applying this one maxim. We shall march. It's nearly midnight, the French can scarcely appear in St. David before eight o'clock."

Clive was about to leave.

"Once more, please, what are you called?"

"Clive, ensign in the second company."

"Clive ... I'll remember the name and also the man who bears it."

The Major ran out and called to the sentinels to alarm the camp.

When the French appeared before Cuddalore in order, as they expected, to storm the weakest part of the fortifications first, the fort seemed absolutely quiet. Men with scaling-ladders ran ahead of the infantry. The French reached the palisades undisturbed.

But the ladders were barely leaning against the wall and the infantrymen pressing forward to climb up when suddenly guns appeared from every loop-hole and a rain of bullets poured down upon the French.

Surprised, they took to flight, but soon reassembled and again advanced against the wall, drawn up in squares. Clearly they still clung firmly to their opinion that they only had a limited garrison against them. But now the cannons disillusioned them. The English fired cannister shot into the approaching masses and tore wide holes in the squares of infantry. Panic seized the stormers, they ran away and did not stop until they reached the road to Pondicherry.

But on the battlements of Cuddalore stood Stringer Lawrence, the fattest major in the English army, and roared with laughter till the tears ran down his cheeks.

Now the two Hindus, Hotschi Hoddi and Bunda Mutal, undertook to comb the town for spies. And it soon became clear what role Ibn Batuta was playing. The Hindus ascertained that the first sepoys which England had set up were preparing to go over to the enemy. Ibn Batuta was hanged and the commander of the sepoys was taken to St. Helena with all the Hindu officers.

Only Saveri Mutu, the one-armed beggar, was not found. He was destined to cross Clive's path once more in a decisive hour but then to receive the deserved punishment.

Shortly afterwards, a squadron of nine men-of-war coming from England arrived at Fort St. David and joined Admiral Griffin's eleven units. This combination formed the greatest sea force which had so far ever assembled in Asia. As the senior officer, Admiral Boscawen took over the command of the whole force and ordered the immediate attack on Pondicherry.

From all sides trenches pushed their way towards the ramparts of the French fortress, the greatest and most strongly armed place in Asia. For four days and four nights the English burrowed through the sand.

The length of the fortress amounted to eleven miles. It was defended by eleven bastions, completely surrounded by a moat, was hedged in on all sides with aloes and thorny plants and thereby secured against cavalry attacks. The fortifications stretched in a semi-circle from beach to beach, six and a half miles long. All five roads were covered by well-manned redoubts and a hundred cannons threatened the four points of the compass.

On the fifth day the gates opened and the French battalions rushed out, drawn up in squares, to overthrow

the English by a sortie and to break the ring which was drawn ever more tightly about them.

Clive and his foot-soldiers scrambled hurriedly out of their ditches to receive the enemy's blow. The neighbouring trenches also came to life. The English sepoy appeared and joined their white comrades. But the first shots had scarcely fallen when the Indian soldiers took to flight. An Indian sepoy officer who sought to keep them back by force was shot by his own men.

So the English infantrymen had to bear the brunt alone.

Clive stood and fired shot after shot. He worked for all he was worth pushing one paper cartridge after another into the barrel, shaking out powder, aiming and firing. Suddenly he noticed that his supply of ammunition was running low. And he was so absorbed in his work that he forgot all about his surroundings, leaned his gun against a tree and rushed away to fetch fresh cartridges.

The men of the second regiment raised their heads in amazement and watched the extraordinary ensign who was running away over ditches and mounds. A burst of laughter broke out. Then the next company also became attentive. Ensign Robertsen stopped in the thick of the battle, pointed to Clive with his finger and shouted: "Look there, how he's running away, the coward!" and laying his hand to his mouth he cried again after him: "Cow . . . ard!"

The two syllables reached Clive's ear. He stopped short, understood, turned round and ran back. "What did you shout?" he yelled to Robertsen above the noise of the battle, from a hundred paces away.

The latter uttered the cry a second time.

"Cow . . . ard!" rang in Clive's ear.

He stood, quivering with rage and reflecting with lightning speed what he ought to do. The minutes were precious, it wouldn't do to throw himself on his comrade and bring him to account during the battle.

So Clive ran away, postponing his revenge. He came

to a halt in his tent, hurriedly seized a case of cartridges, loaded them on his shoulder and rushed back into the battle, panting under his burden.

He found his company again in the place where he had left it, forced the lid of the case open with the butt-end of his weapon and began to fire again. And all the infantrymen who had used up their cartridges got fresh ammunition from the supply which Clive had brought.

Meanwhile the batteries of the men-of-war began to roar and the first cannon balls fell among the squares of the French foot-soldiers. Still firing, these withdrew to the ramparts of the fortress and disappeared behind the gates.

Clive fired one last shot from his barrel. Then he flung the weapon to the ground and hurled himself on Ensign Robertsen. The latter drew his sword. At the same moment Clive tore his sabre from its sheath and the two weapons struck against one another.

But before a verdict had been reached, officers ran up, separated the two combatants and brought them into the camp.

Then they stood in front of Major Lawrence. Clive accused his comrade of insulting and injuring his honour. Robertsen described how he had seen Clive running towards the tents for all he was worth and did not deny that he had shouted the abusive word after him as he ran away.

"How often did you fire in the interval between Ensign Clive's running away and his return?" Major Lawrence asked the accused.

"It must have been about six shots, Major."

"So Ensign Clive covered the distance there and back in three minutes, in that case he did not linger in his tent?"

Robertsen admitted this and the witnesses declared that such had been the case.

The Major decided: "You have done wrong, Ensign Robertsen. You will apologise to Ensign Clive in front of the assembled troops. But to you, Clive, I say: The men

are there to fetch cartridges. That you forgot this in the heat of the battle is a mistake, a minor one it is true, but still a mistake." Then he got up and issued the summons.

Commands rang out, the wall of infantrymen was built. Ensign Robertsen stepped forward and apologised as he was ordered. Shouts sounded again and the men withdrew and dispersed.

Robertsen also made off, with bowed head.

As Clive saw him go the proceedings rose afresh before his mind's eye and the word 'coward' rang in his ears. Boundless rage overcame him. He ran after him as he disappeared, seizing a corporal's stick which was leaning against the entrance to a tent.

Then they stood opposite to one another. Clive brandished the stick; the other ducked, looking imploringly at the raging man. This look touched the heart of the furious Clive. Then, for the first time in his life Bob Clive recovered control of himself at the very height of his passion. He let the raised arm fall and said: "No, Robertsen, I shalln't strike you! I despise you too much."

Robertsen went away. Then he saw that grenadiers had been standing near and had been witnesses of the incident. He went back to Major Lawrence handed over his sword and took his departure.

Bob Clive spent his days and nights digging trenches towards the fort. When he had arrived within shooting distance of the town, Major Lawrence came to him. The trench was filled with infantrymen ready for attack. Then the commander gave the signal. The riflemen scrambled out of the trenches and arranged themselves to storm the palisades.

On the tower flanking the south gate of the fortress stood Joseph François Dupleix and Jan-Begum. When they were told that the English were attempting an attack they

had hurried here to witness the counter attack and to urge on the combatants.

Then the gate opened and Captain Paradis hurled himself against the enemy at the head of his infantrymen. Today he had at last found the longed-for opportunity of fighting and conquering under the eyes of the adored woman; today he would be able to show her how much she meant to him.

His commands rang far out. With all their strength the blue line of defenders rushed against the red columns of the assailants.

The first Englishman attacked by the French was Major Lawrence. The giant had separated himself from his men and pushed forward far ahead of them. Before his soldiers could come to his assistance he was surrounded by Paris Paradis and his infantrymen and in spite of his violent resistance he was disarmed, taken prisoner, quickly dragged behind the walls of the fort and made secure.

Radiant with happiness, Paradis turned round and glanced up at Jan-Begum. She waved down to the victor from the battlements. He lowered his sword. The greatest desire of his life had been fulfilled.

Now the English were close to. At the head of his infantrymen, Clive hurled himself against Paradis and his men. Now Clive would avenge the insult which had been offered to his general. With drawn sword he advanced against Paradis.

But before the two combatants could come to close quarters Captain Paradis was checked in his course, struck by several bullets.

For a moment he still stood there upright then he spun round, threw back his head and looked up to the battlements of the tower where Jan-Begum was standing. Once more he raised his hand to greet her then he collapsed, dead.

In spite of heroic courage, in spite of using the last of his strength, Clive did not succeed in forcing his way in

through the gate of Pondicherry. Under the fire of the garrison which rained down from the palisades, his attack gave way. When the English turned to reach their trenches they left more than a hundred Frenchmen dead on the field. They themselves mourned but few dead and wounded but lamented the loss of their general.

The siege lasted for eight weeks, then it was raised. At the beginning of October the heavens opened their sluices and the plains of the Carnatic were transformed into lakes and bogs.

The English battleships left the roads of Pondicherry and returned to St. David; the army marched away over the yellow sand.

Dupleix had successfully resisted the greatest military force which had so far ever been raised in India.

"We are ignorant of the art of warfare," Ensign Robert Clive informed his old uncle, Dan Bayley, in distant Hope Hall, "some of our engineers are masters of theory but they lack all practical experience and above all are wanting in decision. Then we have others who know nothing about either theory or practice but who set to work boldly and energetically when they are ordered to tackle something. Not one of the officers can judge whether the engineers are doing the right thing or not. Now the rainy season has set in and we have already lost so many men that we shall not be able to begin again from the beginning."

Once more the streets of Pondicherry echoed with the sounds and noises of a triumph. The English had scarcely retreated when Dupleix had the bells rung and the mortars fired. Heralds ran through the town and called the inhabitants together in the square in front of the government building.

Here the body of Captain Paris Paradis, the victor of St. Thomé, the defender of Pondicherry, was lying in state.

In emotional words the Governor congratulated the citizens of the town on having recovered their freedom. He also referred to the sacrifice which Paradis, his general and friend, had made in the great cause.

With the ringing of bells and the roaring of the mortars was mingled the chanting of the crowd intoning the 'Te Deum'.

A few hours later Dupleix, Jan-Begum and Ananda gathered together for a discussion. It was decided to represent the raising of the siege as a mighty victory for French arms to the Indian public.

Then, in spite of their mutual dislike, Jan-Begum and the Hindu sat down at one and the same writing table and translated into the languages of the country the tremendously long, verbose letter in which M. Dupleix described the greatness of his victory to the Indian princes. There one could read that Dupleix had driven back the most terrible attack which had ever been made in India, that he himself was one of the greatest and bravest warriors, that the French were the finest nation in the world, that their warlike spirit had defeated the worthless, English, shopkeeping nation a people who knew how to carry on trade but not how to fight.

Camel riders speeded to Arcot, to Aurangabad, Trichinopoly, Vellore and a hundred other princely courts, even to Delhi itself, to spread the news of the victory.

And from all sides the congratulators streamed up, laden with gifts. Who should distrust Dupleix' boasting description? Had not Madras been conquered? Was not Pondicherry still unconquered? The facts spoke for M. Dupleix.

Before the Governor could put his next plans into practice, the situation altered. In November a French ship of state cast anchor in the roads and a representative of the Company sent by M. Machault d'Arouville Fuloy, the successor to the Finance Minister Orry, appeared, bringing the

news that England and France had made peace at Aix-la-Chapelle. According to this peace Madras was to be restored to the English.

Dupleix fumed, raged, stormed, cursed and threatened. Madame Jeanne wept, implored, sulked and pleaded. The Governor cried: "We have fortified Madras and made it into a serviceable fort and shall the English have the benefit of it? I refuse to agree and to surrender Madras."

The envoy showed the Governor that his resistance was useless. For it was clear to all concerned, not least to Dupleix himself, that he ought not to let it come to an open revolt.

The envoy went a step further. "In the opinion of the Company," he explained, "the annexation of Madras implies a breach of international law, which, if it remained unexpiated, would bring eternal disgrace upon France."

"France and the Company are far away. There is nobody there who can judge India and Indian conditions. Every conscientious representative of France would have behaved in exactly the same way in my position. The only crime which has been committed here, La Bourdonnais has taken upon his shoulders, for he ought never to have agreed that Madras might be restored to English possession in payment of a ransom!

"M. La Bourdonnais is sitting in the Bastille accused of theft, fraud and high treason, on your denunciation."

M. Dupleix barely succeeded in hiding the satisfaction with which he received these tidings. The welcome news put him in an obliging temper. The wrinkles on Madame's face also smoothed themselves out and the old gleam appeared in the dark eyes.

The envoy again turned to M. Dupleix and continued to deliver the rest of his message: "Under no circumstances must it be known that the breach of international law implied by the tearing up of the ransom treaty was decreed by the High Council!"

"More than that," Dupleix interrupted triumphantly, "the whole population of Pondicherry demanded and decreed the annulment of the treaty!"

"That is just what worries the King and the Company so much. We should like you, M. le Gouverneur, to take the blame for this ..."

"I wouldn't dream of it!" cried Dupleix jumping up and storming across the room.

When the envoy observed that Dupleix was calming down he hastened to make a proposal which, as he knew, would not fail to have its effect on M. Dupleix. "Would you be persuaded to accept the blame, M. Le Gouverneur, if the King were to compensate you in a generous way?"

Dupleix pricked up his ears; his eyes travelled backwards and forwards between the envoy and Jeanne. Jan-Begum nodded to her husband with a friendly smile.

"What prospects might His Majesty have in view for me?"

"Well, he might make you a marquis!"

Dupleix changed colour, kept control of himself with difficulty but betrayed all the same how deeply the proposal affected him. At last he nodded. He who was usually so eloquent only succeeded with a great effort in finding suitable words to express his agreement.

Then followed the exchange of documents.

As dictated by the Parisian envoy, Joseph François Dupleix signed a statement according to which he, the Governor, Marquis Dupleix – the title was also included in the document – had broken the ransom treaty and infringed the international law entirely alone and on his own responsibility. Neither the French Government nor the East India Company had any connection with the Madras affair. The same applied to the High Council and the people of Pondicherry.

When the document was in the hands of the Parisian envoy the latter handed over the deed signed by the King

which raised M. Joseph François Dupleix, his wedded wife Jeanne, née Albert, and all their children and successors to the rank of Marquis.

Once again Dupleix owed a great success in his life to the clever little Jan-Begum.

"If it had not been for your advice I should have torn up the ransom agreement by my own authority, beloved, and have brought severe reprimands down upon myself!" said the Marquis, when the husband and wife met in Jeanne's closet to discuss their views as usual.

"But one can't reprimand the High Council and the entire population of Pondicherry, darling."

"That is why they now set the marquis' coronet on my head, beloved."

"It is the first crown you have worn but it will be the smallest."

"France and England are at peace," replied the Marquis sadly.

"Yes, but not India and India. Here the sons are the enemies of the fathers ..."

"... and the grandsons are the friends of the grandfathers since they are the enemies of the sons."

"That is a fact on which one can rely."

"Our little game has been played to a finish and won. Now let us turn to the great one."

As a matter of fact those operations which Dupleix called the 'great game' and in which nothing more nor less than the throne of Delhi was at stake, had begun.

On the frontier of the Carnatic stood the released Chanda Sahib, ready to strike the first blow which would destroy the old regime in India and clear the space on which Dupleix would erect a new French India.

Clive was already wearing the scarlet uniform of the English foot-soldiers for the third year. He belonged to an army which was idling about the forts of St. David and

St. George in far too great numbers for peaceful tasks and for whom employment was being sought.

Now there were settlements and agreements between Governor Saunders and King Shahaji, a pretender to the throne of Tanjore. This King Shahaji had promised the English Fort Devikotta as a possession on condition that they helped him to his throne. The English had to conquer the fort for themselves.

For a long time Governor Saunders considered the matter from every point of view and finally reached the conclusion that the ownership of this fort would be a great advantage to England since it commanded the mouth of the Coleroon and would offer the possibility of constructing a useful harbour. Now there was serious shortage of harbours on the Coromandel coast. The expedition was therefore decided upon.

Under the command of Major Stringer Lawrence, Clive went into the field against the fortress of Tanjore which lay in the thickest jungle, protected by the river Coleroon and surrounded by swamps.

The nature of the territory was such that the conquest could only be undertaken from the opposite bank of the river for only here was there a subsoil firm enough to bear the cannons.

As soon as the people of Tanjore saw the English they poured a shower of bullets over the assailants. The English ascertained that the walls and ramparts of the stronghold were of such a thickness and height that even under favourable conditions its capture would be an impossibility.

After the officers had examined the position they held a council of war.

"To cross the river under the fire of the garrison would be a feat of daring which only a madman would undertake," de Gings maintained.

"I am prepared to risk it," announced Clive.

"Only a madman . . ." repeated de Gings.

"I'll go," Clive persisted.

Nobody gainsaid him. Clive – he was a madman; one might expect anything from him.

De Gingens clung firmly to his opinion. "It is impossible and should not be allowed!"

"I know something much more impossible!"

"And that is?"

"That Englishmen should yield to Indians!" came the reply.

The matter was settled so far as Clive was concerned. They had intended to capture Devikotta and they must keep to this. Showers of bullets were no counter-argument. And without hesitating, Clive set about putting the affair into practice.

In his section there was an infantryman by the name of John More, a ship's carpenter by trade. Clive consulted him and the two devised a plan.

While the cannons thundered against a certain part of the wall of Devikotta and made a breach in it foot by foot, the infantrymen felled trees and constructed a raft under the guidance of John More.

By night More tied a rope round his body, swam across the river, and bound the rope round a tree close to the enemy outposts but so quietly that nobody was aware of him.

On the following morning Clive was the first to embark on the raft. With thirty-four Europeans, he towed himself across to the other side, protected by the fire of his own artillery which was shooting fiercely above the spot to which the rope was attached thus preventing the people of Tanjore from discovering the rope or doing any harm.

Always protected by artillery fire, the raft went across a second and third time and landed sixty sepoy in all. Clive entrusted these sepoys with the task of defending his rear and ensuring his contact with the bank while he himself set out at the head of his men to storm the breach.

But the sepoy's hung back and the Tanjorians fell upon Clive in the rear. He suddenly found himself between two fires. In a trice thirty of the thirty-four accompanying him were killed. Only three men, led by Clive, succeeded in fighting their way back to the bank. Here, in the meantime Major Lawrence had landed with the main body of the troops. For the second time the indefatigable and tenacious Clive undertook to lead the infantry to the attack. This time he fought his way up to the breach, broke down the resistance of the Tanjorians and captured the fort.

The capture of Devikotta was the first of Clive's military exploits which found its way into the history of England.

Clive was among those affected by the demobilisation which Saunders regarded as a necessary sequel to the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. He took off his uniform and returned to Madras.

With the highest hopes he took his old place. He who had defended St. David, besieged Pondicherry and conquered Devikotta would be granted permission to trade on his own account by the Company, of this he felt confident.

The reply which he got to his request reduced all his hopes to nothing. Not only was he refused the said permission he was also denied the right to count in the famous eight years apprenticeship the two years which he had served as a soldier.

So Clive stood once more in front of Mr. Hornby. The latter sent him to the factory and instructed him to pay out the advance money to the Indian weavers, to check the measurements of the muslin delivered and to pay the wages.

The ships had taken nearly two years to render a single exchange of letters possible between Margaret Maskelyne and Robert Clive. The girl's answer showed Clive that he

had been understood. Nevertheless he realised from every line that a great deal more time would pass before Margaret could leave the ship in Madras.

She was in no way offended by his needy existence and disclosed that she herself was only a simple girl and that it suited her desires to become the life-companion of a man who, far from splendour and fame, offered her a sincere inner happiness. And Margaret Maskelyne left no doubt that such happiness could only flourish in close relationship far from the bustle of the world.

Happiness in restricted circumstances, the setting up of a modest household – Clive's means did not even suffice for the attainment of this humble goal. In the position in which he found himself he ought not to urge the girl to come to India and share with him a life whose basis one might without exaggeration call tiny to the point of indivisibility.

Again Clive had to recognise the fact that fate was in no hurry to keep its promise. Margaret and Bob might well become old people before they found one another.

The soldier Clive had remained exempt from drill, had entered his name in the book of English heroes of war but the luck of a great creative deed had remained denied to him.

Now he was again faced by the old misery of a poverty-stricken existence and an insignificant activity. Severe fits of depression took possession of him.

He had now been living for more than four years in the murderous heat of India, scarcely fifteen degrees of latitude distant from the equator, without being able to procure the slightest indulgence for himself. While the Councillors had spent the burning hours of the day on their comfortable couches, gasping for air, idle and cared for by a crowd of servants, Clive had made forced marches through the jungle, led sorties, dug trenches through the earth, repelled assaults or undertaken them himself and

had finally conquered a whole fortress for England. The exertions of the war had not passed over him without leaving their trace.

Now every hour, every minute, poured fresh drops of poison into the soul which dwelt in this weakened body. The ingratitude of the Company or, if you like, of his country festered in his blood. He was seized with intolerable headaches, at first only at long intervals, but then returning in faster succession until at last they took continual possession of him. There was an incessant roaring and buzzing in his brain, his heart hammered away at a tremendous speed, his strength declined. For some time the drug which the doctor gave him and which he called 'Jesuit's powder' (today it is called 'quinine') afforded a certain relief. But then the fits of depression returned, more severe than before.

Racked with pains, Clive tossed to and fro on his couch. Forms rose in the corners of his darkened room, emerged from the chalky walls, came up to him, laid their hands round his neck to choke him and beat on his brain with their fists. He defended himself with his natural courage and was as little afraid of the ghosts as he had been of the living.

But then the feeling of unbearable loneliness weighed upon his chest. He cried out. No one answered; no one hurried up to give him relief and consolation. Indeed who should have visited him? Was he not on hostile terms with all his companions, with Smith as well as with Robertsen? Did not Mr. Hornby hate him? He had been separated from Major Lawrence. Governor Saunders lived in other spheres. Stone remained indifferent. Only Edmund Maskelyne put in an occasional appearance. But he understood the sick Clive even less than he had understood the healthy one.

The root of the illness lay in the lack of opportunity for action. The nature made for work and deeds revolted against the bonds which were laid upon it. As soon as he

could act, fight and conquer he was Robert Clive. Then he recognised himself, men understood him and even gave him a word of praise. But a Clive who scuffled with ghosts must have seemed still more eerie to them than the bullet-proof Clive who had summoned death eagerly but in vain. Thus his isolation became ever greater and he was possessed more and more completely by the idea that men drew back from him fled from him, left him alone.

When, in course of time, the illness became worse Clive was sent to Calcutta to recuperate, that he might recover his health in the wintry coolness.

Dupleix' great game was beginning. The curtain rose on the first act of a play that Jan-Begum had devised, Joseph François had prepared and which the Marquis Dupleix was now setting about performing with actors who had not to know that they were only puppets in the hands of the exceptionally clever and energetic wire-puller.

A prologue in which an old, long-bearded man co-operated with a very young one, scarcely grown out of his boyhood, introduced the plot which was to end, very much against the will of the manager, with England's dominion over India.

Chanda Sahib, released by Dupleix, had attacked the Carnatic and had marched through the province as an errant knight, plundering and burning and had soon increased his following to six thousand and finally to forty thousand soldiers. Then he had marched to Bijapur to welcome the young Muzaffar Jang, the grandson of the ancient Nizam-al-Mulk, to lead him into the field and to set him on the throne of the Decan.

The two rebels met in the durbar. In front of his lord, Muzaffar Jang, the twenty-year-old, slender, courageous prince inspired by deeds of war and heroism, stood the old Chanda, the legendary, cunning, ferocious knight.

Deeply affected the youth sank into the arms of his vassal.

"You, my angel, my good spirit," he cried passionately "I will accompany you until you have brought all your undertakings to a successful conclusion and triumph at your side. But should fortune turn her back on you, then I will turn back with you and die!" And he swore the sacred soldier's oath taking his dagger and sabre in his hand at the same time "You shall be sharpened for my own destruction, sabre and dagger, if I break my oath."

"The Frank shall be the third in the union! The victor of St. Thomé and Pondicherry will strengthen our army and make it invincible!" Chanda joined in.

And he paid homage to the youth Muzaffar as his acknowledged Subadar of Southern India. But Muzaffar raised the black-bearded man and solemnly gave him the Carnatic in feof and appointed him Nabob of Arcot.

In accordance with the director's plans, the play took a tragi-dramatic turn; the scene changed and warlike trumpets sounded.

Anwar ed Din Khan had first to be deposed.

The Old Man of Arcot learned what was being purposed against him. He summoned his warriors to battle and marched against the enemy with his sons Maphuze Khan and Mohammed Ali. He entrenched himself near the mountain fortress of Ambar and made everything ready to ward off the attack of Chanda and Muzaffar who were approaching with their forty thousand men.

D'Auteuil hurried from Pondicherry with four hundred infantry and eight hundred sepoy to help Chanda Sahib.

When the generals came in sight of the mountain fortress of Ambar and the camp, d'Auteuil offered to storm the earthworks alone, with the French troops.

"Storm them, Colonel," declared Chanda Sahib, "and Allah be with you."

But Colonel d'Auteuil stood in front of his men and told them about the immense treasures in gold, silver, precious stones and pearls which they would find in the Nabob's camp.

Then he proceeded to storm it. Twice his infantry were repulsed by Anwar ed Din's artillery. Colonel d'Auteuil himself was wounded but the infantrymen, coveting the treasure, demanded a third attack. Once more they charged, scrambled up the earthworks and forced their way into the camp.

Mounted on an elephant, Anwar ed Din rode against them. On his left Maphuze Khan charged forwards. Behind the two generals fluttered the flags bearing the emblems of their high rank.

Then, hit by a cannon-ball before the eyes of his horrified father, Maphuze Khan fell from his elephant, dragging his standard with him.

Spurred on by pain and rage, Anwar ed Din Khan called to his elephant driver: "A thousand rupees reward if you lead me against Chanda Sahib!"

Heedless of the bullets whistling round him, the driver drove the elephant on towards the ranks of the French.

There Anwar ed Din Khan, the hundred-and-eight-year-old Nabob of the Carnatic, collapsed, shot through the heart by a musket-ball. But the elephant charged on and the Nabob tumbled head over heels from the howdah to the ground. He was trampled underfoot by the elephants charging along behind.

Then his soldiers took to flight, abandoned women and children, cattle and arms, gold and silver, and scattered in all directions.

Mohammed Ali, the only survivor of the line of Anwar ed Din Khan, fled with a small remnant of faithful troops to distant Trichinopoly to entrench himself in the mountain fortress.

But the victory of Ambar represented, as Macaulay observed, the beginning of Dupleix' future greatness.

Then the puppets rebelled against their master, snapped the wires and set about continuing the performance of the play according to their own ideas.

Once again tremendous jubilation rang through the streets of Pondicherry. But this time it was not the Marquis Dupleix who organised the victory festivities. With all the power of his eloquence he urged Chanda Sahib and Muzaffar Jang to postpone the celebration until a later date. "March against Trichinopoly, gentlemen. Until you have put an end to Mohammed Ali you should not consider yourselves as lords of the Carnatic. In Aurangabad, Nasir Jang is arming to win back the Carnatic."

But Chanda laughed and the young Muzaffar applauded with a chuckle when his long-bearded friend declared: "Nasir knows how to make conquests of dancing girls but not how to fight with men."

Dupleix begged and implored his allies not to misjudge the time "You underestimate Nasir and forget that the English will hasten to his assistance!"

"The English?" replied Chanda, "my ears are getting weak or you no longer understand the meaning of your words, M. le Marquis. The English? Was it not the Marquis Dupleix who taught us that the English were shopkeepers and not soldiers?"

And Muzaffar Jang supported his friend and tutor: "If we don't enter Arcot no one will believe that we have won!"

So the Marquis had to submit to mounting the decorated elephants and entering Arcot as a victor at the side of Chanda Sahib. It was the first triumphal procession in which Joseph François Dupleix had taken part with a sour face. He who was greedy for triumphs, wanted war, and he was compelled to celebrate! His actors demanded

the sweet fare of the crowd's applause; he could not move them to proceed with the play.

In the durbar of the fairy palace of Arcot, where a few days before Anwar ed Din Khan had still been giving audience and holding his court, the coronation ceremonies took place. These might also have been called a comedy, for the young Muzaffar, who wanted to win the Subadarship of the Deccan for himself, set the diamond-inlaid crown of the Nabobs of the Carnatic on Chanda Sahib's head. The Marquis Dupleix was the first to render homage to the new nabob and he received the present of the sovereignty over eighty-one villages in the neighbourhood of Pondicherry.

Dupleix impatiently awaited the end of the celebrations. But for many more days he had to hear the music which sounded through the halls of the fairy palace and let the army of those offering allegiance pass by him.

At last the censers burnt out and the intoxicating odours dispersed. The brains of the two Indians became receptive to the exhortations and recommendations of the French.

The three new rulers were just about to sit down on gold-embroidered cushions for a discussion, when the news was brought that the Nizam-al-Mulk had expired in the hundred and fourth year of his life. An immense joy dominated the rebels.

"Nizam's successor will undoubtedly be Nasir Jang," Dupleix began, "and he will be kept busy getting his Subadarship confirmed at the court of Delhi! so we shall gain time to strike a blow at Mohammed Ali in Trichinopoly."

Extraordinary! Chanda Sahib, the clever, discerning Chanda Sahib, always turned a deaf ear to the word, "Trichinopoly".

But Dupleix' tenacity exceeded that of the Indian. With all the power of his eloquence Dupleix impressed

upon his ally the danger which Trichinopoly represented for them.

At last Chanda gave way and hesitatingly declared his readiness to undertake the capture of the fortress.

In conclusion Dupleix announced: "Mohammed Ali must be exterminated though you may consider him weak and insignificant. Mohammed Ali offers the English their last chance of interfering!"

"Mohammed Ali offers us our last chance of interfering," Hotschi opened the discussion which was taking place at the same time in St. David.

The English had received news of the battle of Ambar, the loss of Anwar ed Din Khan, the death of Maphuze Khan, the entry of the victors into Arcot and the coronation comedy. At length they realised with what speed the danger was approaching which had long since been clear on the horizon.

"The victory at Ambar represents a signal which you must not overlook," Hotschi Hoddi warned afresh. "If you want to live, you must interfere."

"France and England are at peace," objected Governor Saunders.

"The French are carrying on the war, Your Excellence!"

"But only against Indians!"

"If Chanda Sahib and Muzaffar Jang conquer Southern India, Dupleix will rule. My advice is: Join Nasir Jang, the new Subadar of the Deccan, at once, send him cannons and infantrymen, surprise Mohammed Ali in Trichinopoly ..."

"We shall break the peace."

"We shall only shoot at Indians ..."

"... but hit Frenchmen!"

Major Lawrence broke in: "I must support Hotschi Hoddi, Your Excellence," he announced. "Let us form an

alliance with the young Mohammed Ali in Trichinopoly and the great Nasir Jang in Aurangabad!"

"But the Subadar hates war. He won't stir an inch," Governor Saunders objected.

"Let us agree on a compromise," Lawrence advised. "As soon as Nasir Jang marches we will march as well. So long as Indians fight against Indians let us join in. If we come across Frenchmen then let us wait until they attack us. If they don't, then we stand by but if they assail us, then it is they who have broken the peace and we who have defended ourselves."

This proposal was accepted.

Lawrence added thoughtfully: "We shall face each other in curious symmetry, three enemies on each side. The mighty Nasir Jang and the violent Chanda Sahib. The youth, Muzaffar Jang and the boy Mohammed Ali. And I, Major Lawrence, and Major d'Auteuil . . ."

"... who incidentally by no means comes up to his great opponent either in girth or in sharpness of wits," answered Saunders jokingly.

Thus it was decided that Lawrence and the English forces should join the army of Nasir Jang.

The two giant armies came upon one another at Valathavur.

Nasir Jang led thirty thousand soldiers into the field, of whom half were mounted, together with thirteen thousand elephants and eight hundred cannons. Mohammed Ali joined these with six thousand cavalry. Major Lawrence hastened up from St. David with six hundred infantry.

The enemy had forty thousand men at their disposal. To these were added the two thousand infantry which d'Auteuil was leading up from Pondicherry.

For the first time in his life M. Dupleix' luck deserted him. For reasons which were never fully explained, a

mutiny broke out among d'Auteuil's officers. They refused obedience to their Colonel and compelled him to abandon his plan of attack.

D'Auteuil decided to march back to Pondicherry. Chanda Sahib immediately announced that under these circumstances he did not wish to fight.

Muzaffar Jang, thus abandoned by his ally, decided to enter into negotiations with his uncle. Envoys were sent to Nasir Jang. The Subadar was glad not to have to fight, assured his nephew of complete exemption from punishment and even promised him the nabobship of the next vacant district. Since he swore on the Koran that he would keep this agreement faithfully, Muzaffar prepared to go over to his uncle's camp.

The warlike act, arranged by Dupleix was, this time through the fault of his own men, turned into a lyrical scene which was to close with a tragi-bloody incident.

Weeping copiously, Muzaffar sank into the arms of his Chanda 'Father'. In emotional words the two friends took leave of one another, solemnly protested their eternal friendship for each other and expressed the hope that they would meet again in a happy hour.

At midnight the troops of Chanda Sahib and Colonel d'Auteuil silently left the camp. The departure took place amid such confusion that the French inadvertently left eleven cannons and forty artillerymen behind.

On the following morning Muzaffar went to his uncle, Nasir Jang, to pay homage to him. But scarcely had he entered the Subadar's camp when he was put in chains and taken off to a tent. According to Nasir Jang's orders he was to be kept a permanent prisoner in this tent in immediate proximity to his uncle.

So Lawrence retired to St. David without having fired a cartridge and – above all – without having broken the peace.

This massacre was called the battle of Valathavur.

Nasir Jang, the lucky victor, now installed Anwar's son, Mohammed Ali as the legitimate Nabob of the Carnatic.

Terrible indeed was the blow which Dupleix had received. All his ambitious schemes, his numerous projects, his intoxicating hopes seemed to be reduced to nought. When he heard the news he broke down.

"All is lost," he said dully.

"Nothing is lost," cried Jan-Begum.

"This miserable Nadir, this conqueror of dancing girls, has won the day without firing a shot, without a stroke of the sword! He has bathed in the blood of unarmed men! My cannoneers lost! This d'Auteuil ..."

"... will get his punishment! He is my sister's husband therefore punish him doubly hard, drive him away, that will rouse the demoralised troops, they will acquire fresh courage! — But let's speak about that later!"

And Dupleix had to acknowledge how invincible was the ally that he had in Jan-Begum. Even in this desperate situation she could offer advice.

It was not easy for Jan-Begum to encourage the disheartened Dupleix again. She sought refuge in the usual, simple method of belittling the disaster. "What has happened?" she asked lightly. "Who has been defeated? Nobody except the young Muzaffar Jang!"

"But we need Muzaffar Jang — he is one of the most important figures in the game! And Chanda Sahib? The old man ran away, cowardly fled!"

"But he lies within reach before the gates of Pondicherry. You will reorganise your army, will utter a few incivilities to him and set him once more in the field."

"He won't let himself be sent. There's nothing more contemptible than a defeated Indian prince."

"I know how we can give him courage – how we can turn the defeat into a victory! If we haven't beaten Nasir Jang in the field we will get the better of him in his own camp!"

This word of Jan-Begum's met with a response in Dupleix' heart. A prospect of cabals was opened, that impressed itself on his brain, stirred up his energy.

"First you write a letter to Nasir Jang," explained Jan-Begum, "maintaining frankly and freely that d'Auteuil only marched away because you had ordered him to do so. You had at last been convinced that Nasir Jang was the legitimate ruler of the Deccan. In emotional words you describe how much you value him and mention the benefits which you once conferred upon his sister, the mother of his ungrateful nephew."

Dupleix was disappointed. "Nasir Jang won't believe a word I say," he said sadly.

"That is immaterial! To begin with it is merely a question of simply getting into touch with him. We need these negotiations as side-scenes for other negotiations to which we shall actually come later. First of all let us speak about these side-scenes, darling. You send Ananda as plenipotentiary to Nasir Jang. Presents will open the door to him. If possible we must bring things to such a point with the Subadar that he invites you to visit him. You will fall emotionally into his arms, making him proposals, each one wilder and more foolish than the last. You will offer him all kinds of imaginary advantages and make equally nebulous demands."

"And what will we achieve in reality?"

"While you lull him into security, I will force my company upon his generals, will buy them up one after the other, fatten them with promises, feast them on hopes and feed them on dreams. I know with whom I shall begin! With Shanavaze, his most powerful vassal. He loves

Nasir as the tiger loves the gazelle. I shall promise him all he desires."

"And what will he desire?"

"He shall reveal that to Ananda."

Enlightenment spread over Dupleix' face. He understood.

They had only to find a plausible way of bringing the Hindu to the court where he had two cartes blanches to show, an open one which gave him full authority so far as Nasir Jang was concerned and a secret one which informed Shanavaze that the negotiator was empowered to give binding promises.

"The General will shortly be on our side," Jan-Begum went on, "once we have won him he must help to bring other ministers and generals over to us."

Dupleix expressed doubts. Would Ananda be able to perfect such a difficult and complicated task? The Hindu would never find an opportunity of making further enquiries and obtaining further instructions.

"Ananda cannot go alone. I shall accompany him," cried Jan-Begum, "I shall go out into the jungle with my helpers and my helpers' helpers, live in a tent in close proximity to our opponent but completely hidden from his scouts."

Dupleix was taken aback. The greatness, pluck, cleverness and determination which this woman exhibited, touched him to the bottom of his heart. The risk to which she exposed herself was greater than any woman had ever run for her husband.

He saw her before him: how she dwelt in the depths of the jungle; how the tiger glided round the thin walls of her tent; how she bent over the olles leaves by the light of the candle and wrote the mysterious signs with which she enticed, tempted, bribed and even threatened as well if anyone once tempted shrank back from his own betrayal and refused to take the last step. Then the greatness of this woman once more overpowered him, his heart was

filled with awe, he fell on his knees and, overwhelmed by the feeling of admiration, laid his head on his little Jan-Begum's lap. The great Marquis Dupleix before whom India trembled, lay at the feet of the little Eurasian whose grandmother had grown up as a dirty, despised pariah girl in a loam house in the Black Town of Pondicherry.

The Marquis Dupleix sat in terrible judgement on the mutinous officers. They had broken the first of all the rules of war; they had left the allied army in defiance of orders and commands. They were stripped of their rank and dismissed from the army.

This tribunal cleared the way for a reorganisation of the army.

Luck also came to the Marquis' aid. General Ch. J. Patissier, Marquis de Bussy, one of the bravest men and finest generals which the home country had at its disposal, landed, having been sent from France. De Bussy took over the command of the little army and increased, drilled and perfected it to a powerful, and reliable tool.

Meanwhile Ananda, with all the skill which distinguished him, was carrying out his double task at the court of Nasir Jang. And so artfully did the Hindu work that the cunning Nasir did not realise that behind the envoy's open activity a secret one was hidden.

Ever since he had been taking his nephew about with him as a prisoner, the Viceroy had felt safe. He threw himself into the only two amusements which he knew – women and hunting, and left the business of state to his generals and ministers. Thus Ananda found time and opportunity to hold his secret discussions. While Nasir was bestirring himself behind the screens of his harem or shooting tigers from the back of his elephant, Ananda and Shanavaze were setting the snare in which he was to be caught. Nocturnal messengers glided silently backwards and

forwards between the Viceroy's palace and Jan-Begum's tent and soon more than twenty officers were in the little woman's power.

She considered that the time had come to bring the play to an end. After all, in view of the large number of the initiated she had to fear that the danger of discovery would increase if a crisis was not brought about within a short time.

So, in response to her summons, M. Dupleix appeared at the court, threw his arms round Nasir Jang and assured him of his friendship while at the same time Bussy marched off to attack the Subadar's army.

M. Dupleix also hastened to draw up a formal agreement of friendship with the Subadar and to retire in good time.

When the Nabob heard the news of the approach of the French army, he refused to believe in the hostile intentions of the French in view of the friendly agreement which had just been drawn up. And it was only when messengers assured him that de Bussy had bombarded the frontier of Gingen and taken it with sabre in hand that he saw himself compelled to interrupt his accustomed pleasures, take over the leadership of his army and march against the enemy. At the head of an army of sixty thousand infantry, forty-five thousand cavalry and seven hundred elephants, he drew up for battle.

Lawrence also joined him with the English forces.

But this time the Englishman demanded binding agreements about the price which he would receive for his support. Nasir Jang prevaricated in the meantime and prolonged the negotiations until the Major, irritated by the equivocal behaviour, left the field and marched back to St. David.

When Nasir Jang came in sight of the enemy who were advancing against him with a thousand cavalry led

by Chanda Sahib, eight hundred Europeans, two thousand five hundred sepoy and twelve cannons he cried out laughing: "That's not an attack; that's a mad act of drunken Europeans." So, convinced that he was only going for a walk, laughing continually and mocking the enemy, he mounted his elephant. He lay on the soft cushion of his howdah, stroked his little black moustache, had amusing stories told to him by his fools and was fed on candied fruits.

When the first shots were fired he ordered the captive Muzaffar to be fetched from his tent and put on an elephant. He also had his executioner brought. The latter had to take up his position on the back of the elephant behind Muzaffar and hold his axe above the prince's head ready to let it fall at a sign from the Viceroy. So Nasir Jang rode into the battle always accompanied by the elephant bearing the prince and the executioner and firmly determined to have his nephew's head cut off if at any point the battle should take a turn which did not correspond to the royal desires.

After these preparations he gave the signal for the attack. As the battle proceeded he noticed that a large section of his troops were not advancing. He set his elephant at a trot and, still with the elephant carrying Muzaffar and the executioner next to him, he hastened up to Shanavaze Khan. But the latter refused to give the order to attack in spite of the Viceroy's exhortations. Now the real position began to dawn upon the Subadar.

"What a good thing that I brought the traitor Muzaffar with me," he cried, "Praise and glory be to Allah!"

And he raised his hand to give the executioner the agreed sign. At the same moment Shanavaze shot the Subadar in the heart. The Viceroy fell dead from his elephant.

But the executioner, accustomed to the sudden change of power, lowered the axe, climbed down from the elephant

and severed the dead Subadar's head from his body. Then he handed the head to Muzaffar Jang and the executioner was the first subject to pay homage to the new Subadar of the Deccan.

Thus the battle of Gingen was won before it really began.

The Marquis Dupleix had won his great game. He stood at the summit of power and India lay at his feet. He proclaimed Muzaffar Jang, Subadar of the Deccan, and Chanda Sahib, Nabob of the Carnatic, determined to rule southern India with these two princes whom he had raised to their thrones.

The Marquis insisted that the coronation ceremonies should take place in Pondicherry. The three victors accordingly set off on their way to the French capital.

In the howdah of a silvery grey elephant sat Jan-Begum with Dupleix and Muzaffar Jang enthroned on her right and left. All three were clad in splendid Indian clothes, adorned with diamonds and pearls and wore costly crowns on their heads for now Dupleix was also an Indian prince. The Grand Mogul in Delhi had appointed him Viceroy of all the lands between Krishma and Cammori.

But the most splendid crown set with the richest array of diamonds was worn by Jan-Begum on her little head and in her hand she held the fan set with diamonds which up till then had been carried by the favourite wife of the Viceroy of the Deccan. And she did not dream that this crown and this fan would one day be her last possessions and were destined to save her life and that of her husband.

The streets lined with many thousands of people, the mortars thundering, the bells ringing and the crowd singing the 'Te Deum' – Pondicherry had experienced all this before. But the entry of three kings into the government building was unparalleled in the history of the Coromandel coast.

Once more the great hall was scarcely able to contain the number of guests. Four of the gilded chairs had to serve as thrones. They were placed in front of the wall with the light blue tapestry in which the three lilies of France were woven. On these the Marquis Dupleix took his seat with his Jan-Begum between Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib, and Shanavaze Khan and the generals stood behind the chairs with drawn swords while the grandees of India rendered homage to their new ruler. Thus Joseph François Dupleix, the son of a royal tobacco dealer began his rule as absolute monarch over a land three times as large as France and populated by thirty-five million people whereas his overlord Louis scarcely ruled over twenty million subjects.

The province and fortress of Velor were solemnly handed over to him. Further it was decreed that all the coins of the Carnatic should only be struck in Pondicherry and that petitions should only be acknowledged if the Marquis Dupleix had recommended and counter-signed them. The crown treasures of the Deccan were also handed over to Dupleix. Fat sacks filled with precious stones and jewels together with five million livres in bar gold found their way into his coffers. One and a half million livres were introduced into the French East India Company's chest and considerable gifts were divided among the officers and men of the army. Medals were struck bearing the head of M. Dupleix and given to all those who had taken part in the coronation ceremonies, as a memento of the historical hour.

But on the battle field of Gingen M. Dupleix had a four-edged, bronze pillar erected which proclaimed the fame of the victor Dupleix in four languages, in Tamul, Persian, Sanscrit and French. Jan-Begum had composed the text in all these languages. Around this pillar a town was founded which was given the name 'Dupleix Fatihabad', that is 'The Town of Dupleix' victory'. This pillar and this town were

to serve India as an everlasting sign of the greatness and invincibility of its ruler. Nothing seemed so well calculated to make this impression on the souls of the Indian masses as this visible symbol.

"I have you to thank for all this, Jan-Begum," said Dupleix. And he folded his wife Jeanne in his arms and each of his kisses expressed the gratitude and the boundless admiration which he cherished for this woman.

But Jeanne whispered happily: "Then I may ask you for something, darling?"

"Everything you request is granted."

"Then, my François, I beg you to reinstate d'Auteuil. He is my sister's husband and it was not he who committed the crime – it was his officers who mutinied and refused obedience to him."

And in his joy at victory, Dupleix granted Jeanne her request and restored d'Auteuil's rank to him.

When the celebrations came to an end, Muzaffar Jang set off on his way back to Aurangabad, his residence.

On the way home he was killed by generals who felt they had been wronged in the distribution of the booty. A javelin hurled at his head shattered his skull.

But M. Dupleix showed himself equal to such minor incidents. He sent his General, de Bussy, to Aurangabad and had Salabat Jang, a man whom Jan-Begum had indicated to him as being suitable, proclaimed Viceroy of the Deccan in the place of the murdered one.

Now the last and only remaining Indian adversary was Mohammed Ali, who sat in the fortress of Trichinopoly with a small army, hourly expecting the attack which would annihilate him. In order to smoke out this last foe, Chanda Sahib entered the field.

"If Mohammed Ali falls, the East India Company will tumble after him," Dupleix cried out. "Then there will be nothing left for us to do but to throw the handful of Englishmen into the sea."

"Your Divinity will also achieve this last task," Ananda Ranga Pilai chimed in. "I foretell it and Your Divinity knows that Ananda's prophecies are fulfilled."

Nevertheless this soothsaying was not to be fulfilled. The prophet was smitten with blindness, his eyes did not penetrate into Mr. Hornby's factory and he did not recognise the little clerk who was frantically busied with ells there and who, a few months later was to mount the stage of the world theatre and to destroy Dupleix' mighty political building with a shower of blows: Robert Clive.

PART TWO

1751 to 1774

V.

In the main street of Madras leading from the club to Government House, in a line with the splendid villas of the rich merchants and opposite to Mr. Hornby's house lay a long, straggling building, which had served as a factory in past years.

The greater part of the building was still used for the storing of wares in the year 1751. But the last quarter, which had formally comprised the office, had been turned into a room. In front of the walls covered with tapestry and hung with engravings rose several shelves on which the best works of world literature were on good neighbourly terms with commercial account books. A writing table, a few cane chairs and a plain couch constituted the furniture.

In this house lived the man who had undertaken to supply the needs of the English Government in provisions, draught and riding animals, arms and implements for the garrisons of St. George and St. David. He bore the title of 'Commissary for supplying the European troops with provisions' drew a yearly salary of thirty pounds and represented a semi-official personage in so far as he was actually working chiefly for the Government. On the other hand he belonged at the same time to the highest order of merchants, to the élite, who had the right to private trading.

Out there on the sea, the company's ships were carrying cargoes of goods for the account of the provisions commissary, from Madras to Calcutta and back.

Even in his dress this man refrained from the splendour exhibited by the colonial merchants. His coat was simple

but made of the best English cloth and betraying its origin in the workshop of a good London tailor.

The merchant was a young man of twenty-six with a fresh, tanned face in which two dark eyes glowed beneath exceptionally wide and highly arched brows. His name was Robert Clive.

Governor Saunders had taken a seat opposite to him. The two men were smoking cheroots. At first they remained silent. The provisions commissary was just adding up a bill which covered an imposing number of yokes of oxen, many tons of powder and lead, rice and oats. After the work had been checked by the clerks, the merchant pushed the bill across to his visitor. The latter added the cheque in payment and signed it.

"Councillor Pigot can receive the material then?"

Clive answered in the affirmative. "The Councillor will begin his march today?"

The Governor nodded. He puffed at his cigar in silence. Clive knew how heavily Saunders suffered under the burden of responsibility which rested on his shoulders.

At last the Governor decided to speak: "Our military and political position has deteriorated in such a way that I fear the worst for the future. The Indians finally consider us a cowardly mob of shopkeepers who know nothing about fighting..."

Clive nodded. Calmly, almost thoughtfully he said: "The Indians ask: What has England done? And are we not faint-hearted, sir? Are we not sleeping while Dupleix conquers the continent?"

"Dupleix. Always Dupleix everywhere! This intriguer, this liar – there is no crime from which he would shrink. His plots surpass the finest spinning of the Indian intrigue manufacturers. Anyone might think he had been brought up in Delhi. He has the most brazen contempt for truth!"

"I might answer you with Pilate: What is truth? And especially in politics! There the end justifies the means.

It is in the nature of politics that it should be so. Dupleix has recognised that. He is a great man! We should learn from him, sir! Indeed, I go a step further: I am proud of him. Yes, as a European I honour him. He is the first who has recognised the possibilities of India. I wish we were doing for our country what he is doing for his. Just think, three or four years ago the Europeans, the Dutch and Portugese as well as the English and French were grovelling at the feet of every petty Indian prince. Dupleix has taught us what a European, what Europe is capable of. Thus he became invincible; thus he tamed India as the trainer tames the tiger. Now the wild beast lies obediently at his feet."

"We are tenants of the tiny strips of land on which our houses stand..."

"... and the natives despise us!"

"Do not forget, Clive, that I am dependant on London. I am left without money without any means of assistance..."

"So might Dupleix have spoken once!"

"He has no conscience, the Marquis Dupleix. He stirred up Chanda and Muzaffar against Anwar ed Din the very Nabob who had proclaimed peace for his sake! He killed Nasir Jang!"

"And he was right! We should have fallen upon Chanda and Muzaffar!"

"You say that? You, Robert Clive?"

"... then the millions would have flowed into our pockets sir, and you would not have needed to complain now, that you had no money!"

"Money here, money there! I have been deprived of all my troops; I have hardly been left a thousand soldiers! When Pigot marches away in the morning with a hundred and twenty men I shall have a whole hundred men in Madras and fifty in St. David at my disposal! And the officers! Lawrence has gone away disgusted with Indian

politics. I have to entrust the transport on which England's future depends to a councillor, a civilian."

The Governor got up, walked round the table and laid his hands on Clive's shoulders. "Go into the field, Clive! Don't leave me in the lurch! Put on uniform again."

Clive shook his head. "No, sir, I must refuse your request!"

"Your health?"

"That is in order again, thank God."

"In Calcutta, I know, and I'm very glad about it. You don't want to risk yourself again?"

"It isn't that."

"What can it be that keeps you back, Clive? I have a very high opinion of you. You had a warm advocate in Lawrence. 'That Clive', he said, 'knows what to do in every circumstance, the born soldier!'"

"Lawrence ..." said Clive and his face lit up, "the 'Old Gentleman' ... so I used to call him; so he remains in my memory. He was my ideal. Every word of praise which he says to me is due to him ..."

"Then I appeal to you in his name, Clive. It is not only Lawrence who speaks about you like this; there are many soldiers who have not forgotten Ensign Clive, the victor of Devikotta ..."

"... who was discharged without having his years of service counted and was again made into a clerk, delivered up as a slave to Mr. Hornby!"

"No bitterness, Clive. We were at peace and you wanted to trade if my information is correct."

"I have had to serve seven years like Jacob for Leah, sir."

"The ingratitude of your country?"

"Can one's country be grateful or ungrateful, sir?"

"Well then, the ingratitude of the Company. Do not let me beg, Clive. I would appoint you a captain. You would have the opportunity to act, lead and bear responsibility

independently. You would use your imagination for England, for that very country which you want to serve independent of gratitude or ingratitude, simply because it is your country, nothing more and nothing less, that is everything!"

Saunders felt that he was finding the right words to win over this man who was twenty-five years old but mature, self-confident, capable and a real man and who, in spite of all the modesty which he showed, could not be devoid of ambition. So he continued to assail Clive. "I wouldn't ask you, I would respect your wishes, if I had a single other officer at my disposal. But since Maskelyne was lost ..."

"Maskelyne lost?" Clive jumped up. "What has happened to him?"

"Chanda Sahib enticed Captain Gingen's twenty dragoons into a trap outside Trichinopoly. Lieutenant Maskelyne was taken prisoner."

"Good heavens," cried Clive, "Maskelyne has been captured?"

"I didn't know that you took so much interest in him," stammered Saunders, shaken by Clive's violence.

"I'm engaged to his sister. I'm expecting her arrival daily. This, sir, I confess, is what kept me from granting your requests ..."

"... kept me from, so you mean kept and no longer keeps! Thank you, Clive - Captain Clive."

"I shall accompany Pigot," cried Clive, "where is Captain de Gingen now?"

"In Trichinopoly."

"And Maskelyne?"

"With Chanda Sahib, a captive."

"And the reinforcements I'm taking to Trichinopoly, and the war materials, are for use against Chanda," said Clive and it sounded as though he was speaking to himself, "so I shall accompany the transport." But then he went

on as if reconsidering. "So I shall surrender my right to private trade, put on uniform again, not welcome Margaret when she stands on the beach of Madras, fight Indians in the jungle as I did three years ago, in the burning Indian heat ..."

"I have your word, Captain Clive."

"You have it, sir. And the French are still taboo, the game of hide-and-seek goes on, we strike the Indians to hit the French?" Clive's brain went on working, hurrying ahead, pressing for the answers to questions which would present themselves weeks, months later.

"We are at peace with France," repeated Saunders, "I'm accursed with having to bite at these words, swallow them, spit them out and chew them again."

"But first of all it is against Chanda?"

"If Mohammed Ali falls he drags us with him into the abyss."

"So you are practically convinced, sir, that the French will attack us when they have dealt with Mohammed Ali?"

"That is so. But so long as possible we must camouflage our military activities. Mohammed Ali will hold the sword but we shall stand behind him and strike ... if it isn't already too late for that!" Saunders wiped the sweat from his brow. Troubled, Clive noticed the expression of horror in the Governor's eyes. "Go on. Trust in me, sir," he encouraged Saunders who had collapsed onto his chair breathing heavily.

"Mohammed threatens to come to an understanding with Dupleix if we don't send him adequate assistance. If he does that we are lost, a plaything in Dupleix' hands. And you can imagine how things look, Clive, when I tell you that French surveyers have for some days been working in the gardens lying outside the ramparts of our fort and planting little white flags on the estates of English merchants as a sign that this land is French property according to the famous agreement which M. Dupleix has

made with Chanda Sahib and Salabat Jang. For it will actually be the Indians who one day compel us to evacuate our towns. France will maintain her strict neutrality before the eyes of the world but will, in fact, guide every step that the Indians take. Therefore – you must hurry, Clive.”

“I shall go into the field tomorrow, sir. I will carry on our affairs with all my strength ... even though I do so as a civilian.”

“I don’t understand you.”

“I thank you for the rank which you intended for me, sir, but I cannot wear the Captain’s epaulettes. The man is yours even in a citizen’s coat.”

“Thank you, Clive.”

It was another Clive who made ready to go to Trichinopoly a Clive who had a house to set in order, who left something behind, who put off the fulfilment of long-entertained hopes and for the time being renounced the happiness of his life.

He had returned from Calcutta some months before, had recovered his health in the cool of the winter there, had seen Bengal which was called by its official name of “The Indian Garden of Eden” in the documents.

There he himself could have lived, freed from all duties, have studied the world and men, widened his horizon and improved his mind.

Then he returned to Madras. At last people in Madras remembered his services and set him in the place of a provisions commissary which lay exactly half way between the two businesses which he knew, the military and the commercial ones. Now his healthy instinct for profit could develop in full force. He learnt to weigh up the possible against the impossible, what was best to aim at under the given circumstances, to seek the ideal, in fact to

solve a problem which was equally inherent in the military and commerce.

As usual people brought the successful man everything he wanted. The merchants and bankers of Madras made friends with him, and one of them, Mosesum by name, won his especial confidence. The few thousand pounds which Clive had already accumulated were entrusted to this Mosesum who invested them for Clive and saw to it that this money increased substantially. Thus Clive finally came to the point of summoning Margaret Maskelyne to him. For weeks he had been waiting for the letter which would inform him of the fiancée's impending departure. Still he knew nothing more of her than a child's portrait, still he knew nothing more than could be read in half a dozen letters. And yet he loved this girl with all the force of his passionate heart.

He had to admit that fate had kept her word, and had changed his life for the better. The promise had been fulfilled. Death had kept to his pact. He had no more been called or appeared in battle than by the sick-bed. Clive had gone through hunger and thirst, fatigue and showers of bullets, mental derangement and madness, and finally he had reached the goal of his desires.

Now he was abandoning all happiness, all hope, leaving the house which he had acquired and the room which he had prepared for Margaret, going out into the Indian jungle, into the blazing heat, into the world of dangers, fevers and battle.

Saunders had roused the Englishman in him and Clive had not been deaf to this appeal.

"Had I been allowed to carry on trade a few years earlier, I should have refused ever to become a soldier," he told himself, "now that I have once become and been a soldier, I must become one again."

So he made arrangements as to how his business was to be dispatched and how the cargoes afloat between Bengal

and Madras were to be used, commended his fortune to Mosesum and went to the war. This happened in the seventh year of his residence in India after he had been four years a clerk, two a soldier and one half apprentice and half trader.

"Well, my dear Councillor, so we two civilians are going to represent England in the field," Clive greeted Mr Pigot.

"You are a captain, Mr. Clive, so Governor Saunders has told me."

"How can that be! I am a merchant, provisions commissary and only endowed with military powers for this one task. My commission ends in Trichinopoly."

"Provisions commissary, half a soldier after all then! Besides you are the conqueror of Devikotta ..."

Clive gazed thoughtfully into the distance. "Curious," he said, "I scarcely remember it. How impressions are blotted out! The recollection of everything hard fades but we gratefully remember all the good which has been allotted to us. After all there was nothing but struggle and strife, malice and ill-will at the beginning, one single continuous shower of insults, discouragements, and vexations to say nothing of the rain of bullets."

"You defended St. David and besieged Pondicherry."

"That really doesn't count! The fight in the field, uniform against uniform, blue against red – what an honourable fight! Then it is a case of you or I and there is a prize – life! It is almost consoling to think of it. A good, honourable, clean thing. But the quarrels, absurdities and stupidities of everyday life! The baboons!"

"The baboons?"

"It is a good thing that we forget such things after all," answered Clive. The councillor, Pigot, was very much surprised. He questioned, the other answered but answer and question did not agree. So Pigot thought; "He can't

be quite right in the head after all, this Clive. People say he had sunstroke. That is certainly an exaggeration but something is definitely not quite in order with him ..."

Trichinopoly! That was a fortress! For first there was a moat, thirty foot wide, then followed a wall eighteen foot high and five foot thick, then a space twenty-five foot wide, rising sharply, then another wall standing on a stone rampart and measuring another thirty foot in height and flanked by solid, high, round towers every two hundred yards.

Within this wall lay the town, in the middle of which rose a rock a hundred and fifty foot high, absolutely impregnable and crowned by a citadel. In the middle of this citadel stood the castle in whose durbar Chanda Sahib had once deceived the love-sick queen and cheated her of throne and life by an oath on the Koran which was a stone.

Many years had gone by since then and Chanda Sahib had long since turned into an old man, twisted with gout, whose former handsomeness and manliness were only indicated by his long, thin, black beard. And yet the old man might proudly call himself the most terrible enemy which the English had found among the Indian princes.

Nevertheless Chanda Sahib proved no match for a Clive. With his hundred and twenty men the provisions commissary fell upon the ten thousand Indian cavalry and out of reach of bullets, sabres and spears fought his way through the midst of the host of cavalry to the gate of Trichinopoly and delivered draught-animals, men, arms, ammunition and provisions to Mohammed Ali.

"Where is Maskelyne?" was his first question when he stood in front of Captain de Gingen.

"Chanda Sahib has set him free," came the reply, "the French compelled him to. They wanted to prove that they were strictly maintaining peace."

"And where is Maskelyne now?"

Captain de Gingens shrugged his shoulders. "Where can he be? In St. David . . . in Madras . . ."

With sharp eyes Clive examined the fortifications of the town and estimated how far and how long the six hundred Englishmen gathered here would be able to resist the nine hundred French and ten thousand Indians swarming around the walls. He stood on the roof of the castle and gazed far out across the country away over the endless green sea of jungles to the mountain ranges which, in the far distance, stood out silvery against the deep blue of the sky.

For a long time he was lost in thought. The tenacious, determined Dupleix would not allow Chanda to raise the siege. With money and threats he would compel him to starve out the fortress. They would not succeed in bringing a provisions train through a second time. The French would be on their guard and would cover the rear of the Indians. No, Trichinopoly must look after itself, there was nothing to be hoped for from Madras and St. David. Altogether there were a hundred and fifty men there. Re-inforcements from England could not be expected since nobody in London knew anything about the war and they must not hear anything about it. How long could the fortress still hold out? One month, two, then the French cannons would have made breaches . . . no one knew better than Clive how such things were done . . . then the French and Indians would fall upon Mohammed Ali and slay his army to the last man, then the English would be granted free withdrawal, caught somewhere in the jungle, surrounded and butchered to the last man without a single Frenchman being seen . . . for no blue coats would appear, no white-skinned faces . . . and then?

Clive shuddered. Then the hoards would break into Madras and St. David, a hundred thousand, two hundred thousand, half a million . . . the whole of India would

hasten to help the victorious Dupleix who had taken Trichinopoly ... and the Marquis would stand by and laugh ... laugh ... Who was it who had laughed so loud and heartily till the tears ran down his cheeks? Of course, Lawrence ... that time when he had let the cunning Paradis storm Cuddalore because he thought the fort was evacuated ... he had picked out the weakest point ...

The weakest point? Lawrence had always been talking about the weakest point. That was the second of the old gentleman's three tactical maxims ... the first? That was the one about marching ...

The weakest point ... and wars are won with legs ...

And in the same instant the knowledge of what he had to do occurred to Clive – Robber Clive – it occurred to him like a release, encouraged him, carried him out of himself and it was as though he could see far away over the green sea of the jungles, over rivers and mountains and the walls of St. David to Pondicherry, into the heart of Dupleix, the Governor and Marquis who called himself Munsub, Subadar and Nabob and into the heart of Jan-Begum, the most cunning of all cunning women. For now he, the merchant, Robert Clive, had discovered the weak point and now it was a case of winning the war ... with legs.

And he sent for Mohammed Ali and Captain de Gings. They climbed up to him on the roof of the castle, sat down beside him on the walled battlements and listened to what he said to them.

"Gentlemen," explained the provisions commissary, "you have at your disposal men, ammunition and provisions for three months. I pledge you my word that within two months Chanda Sahib will raise the siege and withdraw from Trichinopoly."

Captain de Gings wanted to object, and stammered something about a hopeless position and the impossibility of moving Chanda to retreat.

But then Clive sprang up, clenched his fists at the captain and shouted at him: "What I have said, I have said. The siege will be raised within eight weeks. And now will you please let me have two of your best horses, gentlemen, and twelve sepoy. I must go straight back to Madras. Without an escort I can't fight my way through the ring which Chanda has made round the town. But I won't deprive the defence of one single Englishman – a dozen sepoy will do for me. Farewell, gentlemen."

Twelve sepoy accompanied Clive when he left the fortress under cover of night. Not one of these sepoy escaped with his life. Clive alone survived the rain of bullets and the shower of lances and, carried away from his pursuers by the swiftness of his horse, reached Madras, two hundred miles away, in two days.

At full speed he rode into St. George. When he brought the horse to a halt in front of the government building, it fell down dead beneath him.

Messengers hurried through the town to summon the councillors together.

Covered in the dust of the Coromandel coast, soaked with the water of south Indian rivers, dried by the blazing heat, torn by the thorns of thickets, Clive faced the assembled councillors.

A cold shiver ran through the bones of Mr. Hornby, Mr. Benfield and Mr. Crommelin when they came in sight of the bearded, tattered and dusty citizen. Such a messenger could only bring evil tidings.

And the spirit of resistance became alert within them on the spot. They were offended by this man's appearance, felt attacked by his defiant nature and they bristled with animosity towards the intruder. An assembly of hedgehogs squatted round Clive who stood before them, a real Robber Bob, determined not to pay the slightest regard to the

gentlemen's need for repose but to achieve what was necessary in spite of their wishes and desires and to use all means to look after their real interests which he knew they were incapable of perceiving.

"Gentlemen, I come from Trichinopoly. I declare to you that it was an unpardonable error to strengthen the garrison of the besieged fortress. With every man whom we have thrown into Trichinopoly our power of resistance has been diminished. We have played into the enemy's hands."

Since Clive noticed that the councillors had not understood him, he sought an image with which he could make the position clear to the merchants. "Imagine Dupleix as a rival," he argued, "who is preparing to capture a market, a market of which you, gentlemen, have so far had the monopoly. What would you do? You would strain all your resources to defend this market, you would mobilise your entire capital, and keep all available goods in readiness. But under no circumstances would you put your money in a chest and anxiously lock it up. But we, gentlemen of the High Council of Madras, are like merchants who in the hour of danger throw their entire fortune into a money-box to which the rival possesses the key. Chanda Sahib is standing guard with raised sword in front of the treasure into which we have just pumped the last of our fortune with the utmost exertion. Meanwhile Dupleix is preparing to capture the market. To keep to our image, the market is India."

Clive's attempt to make them understand by means of this comparison proved a failure. They either did not or would not grasp his meaning.

But with his natural tenacity Clive went on trying to persuade the men of that on which he was convinced the fate of England and India depended. "I see two possibilities of releasing our capital of political force which we have foolishly tied up. The first possibility: We assail the

guardian, Chanda, strike him on the head and gain admittance to our property by force. The other possibility: We tempt the Nabob away from our treasure and set our resources free. I have decided to pursue the latter course."

To invite the councillors' agreement Clive inserted a pause. But the answers which sounded towards him were crushing.

"Who authorized you to interfere in political and military affairs?" asked Mr. Hornby in the very tone in which he had once spoken to his clerk. "If I am correctly informed, you were commissioned to convey troops and materials to Trichinopoly. You have performed your task ..."

"Why do you call us together here, alarm the town and keep us from our work, eh?" Mr. Benfield demanded to know.

"Don't you realise, gentlemen: we are not strong enough to relieve Trichinopoly," Clive burst out, "the enemy is too strong!"

"Just for that!" snorted Mr. Hornby. Then he stood up, supported himself with both hands on the table, leaned forward and stretched his bloated face towards Clive. "Who is leading this enemy, I mean really? Will you be so kind as to tell me that, Mr. Clive?"

"Dupleix," answered Clive who did not realise what the merchant was getting at.

Mr. Hornby nodded in agreement. Then he began to address Clive in the tone of an examiner: "Well then, Dupleix, as you rightly observe, the great Dupleix! Do you want to dare to oppose this Caesar, my dear provisioner?"

"I dare!" roared Clive. And forcibly compelling himself to be calm he added: "You call Dupleix great and a Caesar, Mr. Hornby. I would be the last to belittle M. Dupleix' importance. But I am opposed to the way in which the representatives of England have for many years

been staring at the French Marquis as if they were spell-bound and paralysed. A legend is beginning to grow up which must be destroyed. M. Dupleix is a wonderful politician but he is no soldier. Just consider what this marquis, this imitation nabob, has to show in the way of military achievements, successful battles and honourably fought victories. You will realise that he has always won with clever negotiations and intrigues, never with the sword..."

"... and Madras?" thundered Hornby.

"Madras was captured by La Bourdonnais - not by Dupleix! When the Admiral had left and cleared the field for Dupleix, St. David was besieged. But M. Dupleix was unable to take the fort. At Ambar it was Chanda Sahib who won the victory and defeated Anwar ed Din Khan but not Dupleix! At Gingen it was Shanavaze Khan who vanquished Nasir Jang or rather murdered him - but not Dupleix! In the field this Caesar can be vanquished! And we shall vanquish him!"

Clive had worked himself up into a passion, had spoken louder, more excitedly and more enthusiastically than was customary in the High Council of Madras. The aversion which he roused increased and prevented an objective examination of his arguments. Several of the councillors were already getting up to leave the council chamber.

Clive felt that he was losing ground and fell back on threats: "If you won't listen to me, gentlemen, you will force me to act on my own responsibility..."

"... then we shall bring you to trial!" Mr. Hornby assured him, screaming.

"But every hour is precious! I haven't time to ride to St. David and get the Governor's approval," cried Clive in despair.

Then his glance fell on Mr. Crommelin who felt moved to intervene. He stretched out his arm to secure quiet and

attention. "Remember, you are a young man, Mr. Clive. Most of the men whom you see assembled here have sons of your age. You mustn't forget that!" This appeal to respect for age had a calming effect as was to be expected. Satisfied, Mr. Crommelin again turned to Clive. "You would accept responsibility for England's fate, Mr. Clive?"

"More than that! I accept responsibility for the fate of England and India and for the fate of France as well if you like!"

"That's saying a great deal!" said Mr. Crommelin.

"Why don't you accept responsibility for the fate of the whole world?" sneered Mr. Benfield.

"Lunatic of a boy!" said Mr. Hornby insultingly.

Crommelin cried firmly: "Gentlemen, gentlemen, at least hear Mr. Clive to the end. He hasn't even told us his suggestions yet. Perhaps his proposition is more acceptable than his manner of speaking."

Crommelin's words made a certain impression. Some of the councillors sat down again.

"Will you please speak, then, Mr. Clive."

"The wily Chanda Sahib," began Clive, "has already lost fame, fortune and freedom once before at Trichinopoly. Since the Mahrattas couldn't defeat him in the field they fought him with his own weapons. They resorted to cunning, raised the siege of the town and waited until he had sold his supplies of corn. Then they returned, starved him out and compelled him to surrender..."

"Chanda Sahib was sitting behind the walls of the fortress then, now he is besieging it," groaned Mr. Hornby.

"What have all these stories to do with us?" Mr. Benfield backed him up.

"Let him finish speaking!" stormed Crommelin.

Again Clive went on: "I referred to the Mahrattas' ruse because I want to imitate it. Only blockheads pay ransom money out of their own pockets; the clever man learns from the successes and failures of others. Let us

employ a ruse, gentlemen. Or rather: let us form a plan . . . I believe that such lines of thought are designated by the word 'strategy'. But my advice is to attack the enemy at his weakest point . . ." Clive raised his voice: "Gentlemen, I will go to Arcot and capture Chanda Sahib's capital! I wager anything that the Nabob will promptly withdraw his troops from Trichinopoly in order to regain possession of his capital. Thus we shall release Captain de Gingens from his clutches, recover control of our troops and with one blow become masters of the situation or at least succeed in getting a chance to act. Whereas at the moment we are checkmated, at everyone's mercy. Faith in England will be restored, the morale of our troops raised . . ."

"Talk about realities, Mr. Clive, but not about faith and morale!" Mr. Hornby reprimanded the speaker.

"Faith is the greatest reality, gentlemen," persisted Clive who observed clearly that his words had not been without effect and that all future objections would only cover the retreat of the councillors.

"We must wait until re-inforcements come from England. We have no generals! Lawrence must be replaced!" muttered Mr. Benfield.

"We are running a great risk – exposing ourselves afresh to an enormous number of dangers and exertions!" Hornby expressed his doubts.

"If I were to say that, gentlemen!" cried Clive enthusiastically, striving to sweep the councillors along with him. "But you? Not one of you need leave Madras. You go on with your trading undisturbed. It is I who am going into the field, who stake my life, my health and my business. Into what danger are you going? I need your approval for a military action which, as you have already assured me, does not affect you very much . . ."

"You want to play the general," said Mr. Hornby. But he let it appear that under the given circumstances he would not necessarily be prepared to reject the proposal.

"With emphatic modesty Clive declared: "Since there is no general present I must undertake to do what is necessary myself."

"You are not a soldier, young man."

"I am a captain of the East India Company."

"Now he is promoting himself to the rank of captain!" Hornby cried with a sneer.

And Benfield supported him: "Your coat is covered in dust, Mr. Clive, but I maintain that even under that thick layer of dirt we should perceive the epaulettes which you offer to our eyes in so martial a way."

"Then you would put a greater trust in me if you saw the epaulettes on my shoulders?"

"Up till now soldiers have been recognised by their uniforms."

A voice roared from the door: "Mr. Clive was appointed a captain by me!" Governor Saunders was just entering the room. The councillors stood up to welcome their superior whom chance had brought here from St. David at the right moment. Saunders went up to Clive, patted him on the shoulder and said: "Do you realise now, Mr. Clive, why I attached importance to the fact that you should hold a military rank?"

"I realise, sir, that there are people who can be more effectively convinced by epaulettes than by arguments."

Governor Saunders took the chair and allowed Clive to speak. Now that the atmosphere was cleared of poison and mistrust, the captain unfolded his scheme, speaking clearly and to the point.

When he had finished, Saunders spoke: "I appreciate the brilliance of your plan but I also see the difficulties in carrying it out. Arcot is a large town. It is fortified, armed with cannons and defended by a gigantic army. It is inhabited by a hundred thousand men. The mass of the

people will help the defenders. We have a hundred and fifty soldiers at our disposal – far too small a band for such a great venture.”

“I will risk it with two hundred men!” cried Clive. “Send your recruiting officers through the streets of the town; catch every man with sound arms and legs; mobilise the clerks and younger merchants and in this way we shall have two hundred men at our disposal by tomorrow. To these must be added three hundred sepoys. With this army I shall march against Arcot and release the forces which are imprisoned in Trichinopoly. We recover the six hundred men at one blow. The expedition to Arcot is the only way out we have left. If you refuse your consent to my plan, you will have to embark on your ships and return to England in the knowledge that you have given India to France!”

“And if you don’t succeed in taking Arcot? If you and your little band are wiped out?” asked the Governor.

And Mr. Crommelin gave the answer: “Then England is lost!”

Then Clive sprang up and spoke in a firm, clear voice:

“If I am defeated England is lost, I admit it! But if I don’t march against Arcot, England is just as lost...”

“... which cannot, unfortunately, be denied,” cried Mr. Crommelin as he too, stood up. “Since we are thus lost in either case, I think we accept your proposal.”

“And during your absence, we remain without the slightest protection?” asked Mr. Benfield.

“You will send dispatches to Bengal and have an auxiliary corps from Calcutta put at your disposal. I will explain the situation to Captain Killpatrick in a letter. I know him well from my stay in Calcutta. He won’t shirk his duty...”

“We accept this proposal as well,” declared Mr. Crommelin.

The recognition forced its way into the heads of the councillors that the young man whom they loathed from the bottom of their hearts had realised their true position and had drawn the only possible conclusion from it.

"I still don't understand why we are lost in any case, but I consent," announced Mr. Hornby, expressing his resignation to a fate which he was incapable of grasping with much shaking of the shoulders and many loud snorts.

"I also consent," broke in the councillors, one after the other.

"Since a unanimous decision has been reached, I authorize Captain Clive to make his preparations," said the Governor. Then he closed the meeting.

Saunders and Clive left Government House together. As they were crossing the square, the Governor turned to his companion: "I can also put an officer at your disposal, my dear Captain, whose co-operation you will gladly welcome. Lieutenant Maskelyne has just arrived in Madras..."

"Maskelyne!" cried Clive, "I must speak to him at once..." And scarcely waiting to take his leave, he rushed away to the house where Maskelyne lived.

Then Mr. Crommelin came up to Governor Saunders. Shaking his head, he watched Clive hurry away. Then he said thoughtfully: "Yesterday he was still a civilian, today he is a captain and at twenty-six, takes the fate of three empires in his hands..."

"...I don't know any better hands in which I could lay the fate of England..."

"Perhaps he will become a general..."

"General? My dear Crommelin! If he isn't killed he will make a name for himself in history!"

Governor Saunders did not know that he was repeating the words which Dr. Eathon had once spoken about the young good-for-nothing in Manchester.

What had then been derided as a prophecy, had now developed into a possibility and was soon to be proved a certainty.

"She's coming ... Margaret's coming," cried Maskelyne when he caught sight of Clive.

"She's coming ... she's coming," cried Clive again and again.

"She writes that she will leave London with the next ship ..."

"Then she is already on the way!"

The young man was seized with the consciousness of an immense happiness. How his life had changed! How all his wishes had been fulfilled! His undertakings were successful, his fortune, still modest at present, would grow ... soon they would live together in Madras, Margaret and Bob. They would amass a small fortune and in a few years return to England, still young, but already protected against all storms and in a position to model their lives according to their wishes ... Clive would free the paternal estate in Styche of debt, would develop it ... no longer should his old father worry about a new roof ... they would live modestly but comfortably, devoting the end of their lives to the improvement of their real estate, to work on their own human characters, to the perfecting of their abilities and their knowledge.

Even upon the High Council, Clive had forced his will. He had treated the baboons with boxes on the ear until they ate out of his hand, had used a dreadful number of grand words and had spoken about the fate of three empires. He himself did not believe that. For him the thing was perfectly simple: the colony must be freed from the French pressure which burdened it. The devil himself couldn't carry on trade when M. Dupleix was filling the whole Carnatic with the stench of his ridiculous Indian intrigues and his stupid power politics. So one had to do

a little bragging and rouse the lethargic and deafish councillors with trumpet blasts.

But above all he had to capture Arcot. Thus the time would be filled in until Margaret's arrival. Really, everything could hardly have worked out better.

Clive felt his strength growing. Without stopping to think, he ran into the offices and living quarters to procure subordinates for his little army. The little Walsh was there, Maskelyne's cousin, who had arrived by the same ship that had brought Margaret's letter. He had been working in the London offices of the Company since they had last met, Clive and he, in the hall of India House when they had taken and passed their examination together . . .

"You are an ensign, Walsh, pay attention to the commands," cried Clive to the young merchant, in high spirits.

Clive found three ensigns with the troops, Threnwith, Glas and Revell. "I hereby promote you to the rank of lieutenants, boys. You're going to capture Arcot," he cried to his young comrades.

And soon, at the head of his little army, he left Madras, that prickly cactus in the wilderness of the Carnatic and advanced towards Arcot, the capital of the province, which no Englishman had yet seen with his own eyes.

Guided by the local knowledge of his interpreter, Bunda Mutal, Clive marched through the jungle, over rivers and mountains into the interior of the unexplored land.

Palms rustled over the heads of the marchers. In utter confusion date-palms, coconut-trees and sago-trees alternated with fan-palms and toddy-palms; mighty alamaram fig-trees sent their huge roots from the topmost branches down to the ground. Some of these hanging stems were thicker than the strongest anchor ropes, others finer than the thinnest threads. With its roots and stems each of these trees formed a mighty dome. Then again nipa-palms stretched their pinnate leaves, every single one of which

measured fifteen feet in length and breadth, up to the tops of the date-palms. Almond trees united themselves with jasmine bushes in magic forests overladen with blossom; soaring banana stems swung their giant bunches of yellow cucumbers in the tops of the palms. Gay convolvuli, ever-flowering lawsons shed their intoxicating scents, driving away those who were painfully struggling for breath in the damp heat. Gardenias, mimosa and myrtle, a profusion of cacti and ferns, clothed the earth. Melons and pineapples covered the plains.

The trampling of wild, black buffalo made the earth tremble; fowls flew out of the bushes, long-tailed monkeys jumped from the trees and returned to the tops like lightning; chameleons, scarcely discernible to the eye, clung to the leaves and twigs; peacocks strutted across the fields, rose in the air and flew screaming into the tops of the trees; crocodiles wallowed in the mud of the rivers; clouds of iridescent grass-hoppers obscured the light and swarms of fire-flies illumined the darkness.

By night the roar of the tiger penetrated into the camp and the howl of the jackals shook the air. Snakes rustled round the tents; scorpions crawled out from the palm-leaves of the beds; mosquitos tortured the sleepers.

Further on, the way led past shrines, the pagodas, the ancient, fortified temples, in which first Indra and then Buddha was worshipped and in which Shiva was now adored, the stern, sinister god who rides on a white bull and who wears the moon, a third eye, as an ornament for his brow. And from the dark glorification of a sinister destiny represented by this religion, Clive learned of a destiny which weighs down annihilatingly upon all existence with a devastating and inevitable force, terminating everything with destruction and death.

But the astonished men also saw lovely temples. The sanctuaries lay on islands in the middle of sacred pools. Bathers dived in the consecrated water in which swam

sacred gold-fish watched over by priests who were ready to kill anyone who should dare to catch one of these fish. Other temples lay on high mountains, others were hewn out of the natural mass of the rocks, ornamented with gigantic images of their gods, their sacred carriages, their elephants and lions and decorated with inscriptions whose characters no one could interpret, whose meaning was hidden from the Brahmins themselves. By night, flames shone from the tops of the mountains, burning up there in huge, spherical, bronze pots and lighting up the pagodas.

Palaces, white, glittering seraglios, alternated with miserable huts; cotton fields followed rice fields on which ploughmen were working, their swords in their belts, their quivers of poisoned arrows at their hips. Beggars, monks and itinerant merchants encountered the army, caravans of elephants and camels tramped past, naked men and women went their ways, balancing great pitchers of water on their heads, noble riders on valuable horses accompanied litters in which lay ladies whose noses and ears, fingers and toes, were adorned with pearls and precious stones. Then again they had to cross rivers and climb over dams in which the winter rains were stored up. They admired pumps, sluices and water-conduits thousands of years old which distributed the precious element over the fields. Pits and mines from which diamonds, topazes and amethysts were excavated, salt works and sugar presses, paper mills and granaries and workshops of all kinds lined the road.

There was India ... the varied, gigantic India which Clive had once so ardently desired.

At last the battlements of Arcot appeared, moats, walls and gates. They had still to march three miles over the flat country then the little band would assault the gate.

But then the heavens darkened, a storm arose, thick clouds broke over the earth, waterfalls rushed down upon

the marching column. The travellers crowding the streets fled screaming in all directions, the herds of beasts of burden ran hither and thither, driven by fear, women cried, men cursed, others fell down on the ground and prayed. Every flash of lightning gave rise to shrieks of horror which drowned the beating of the rain until finally all sounds were swallowed up by the thunder.

"March! March!" cried Clive, tearing up and down beside the troops, undisturbed by the raging of the elements, undisturbed by the fear of men, straining directly towards the town.

"God will destroy them!" screamed the fakirs, raising their thin hands towards heaven and threatening the soldiers who did not heed the wrath of the gods, but marched, marched, marched, always encircled by Clive who galloped backwards and forwards between the van and the rearguard, exhorting, encouraging, threatening and cursing his white and brown soldiers. And his musketeers and sepoys followed his instructions; obediently they tramped over the earth, which soon turned into a sea and struggled forwards through the water which washed first over their ankles and soon over their knees.

As the troops were approaching the gates of the town, long, continuous streaks of lightning flashed through the clouds, illumining the world for long moments with a dazzling light. The sentries stared in horror at the column tramping towards them. "Devils are coming," they cried, "strange, white devils! They defy the wrath of the heavens but they are not struck!" And abandoning the gates they rushed into the town, repeating their cry: "Not men are coming but creatures of a higher order! Strangers, white devils!"

Clive marched through the gate without meeting any resistance. Without halting, he directed his steps through the streets of the town. Gradually the clouds dispersed, the thunder died away, the torrential rain ceased and the

powerful sun broke through. While the water was streaming away, carrying with it various utensils from house and home, Clive reached the interior of the town. And the people of Arcot poured into the streets and lined the way to stare at the strange, white devils who had entered the city with thunder and lightning. Meanwhile the garrison ran out of the town by the opposite gate, driven to flight by panic.

The road led uphill past bazaars of indescribable size and beauty and many covetous glances from English soldiers' eyes fell on the array of goods. Then followed palace after palace, each one more splendid than the last until finally the fairy palace, the miracle among the buildings of the Carnatic and the crown of the country appeared. But Clive also directed his steps past the fairy palace in which Anwar ed Din Khan had ruled until he was driven out by Dupleix and Chanda Sahib. On and on he marched until he reached the citadel.

Here he expected the first resistance. But to his amazement, he found here, too, the ramparts and redoubts unoccupied, abandoned by the soldiers.

Without a stroke of the sword he took possession of the citadel and hoisted the Union Jack on top of the highest tower.

"We have captured the fortress with our legs – we must defend it with our spades," Clive told his soldiers.

The fort of Arcot was in a sorry plight. The moats were full of sand, the towers falling down, the ramparts so narrow that the cannons could not be placed on them.

Entrenching tools were unloaded from the baggage wag-gons, the ditches were deepened and filled with water, the ramparts widened, the walls and towers repaired. The walls were a mile long. – Five hundred soldiers had to keep watch, dig ditches, build walls, collect provisions and prepare food.

There were eight cannons and a great deal of powder and lead among the heaps of supplies in the citadel. But the main thing was to furnish the fort with provisions.

Clive received the merchants in the durbar of the palace.

"According to the estimations which have been made by my great Sahib," Bunda Mutal announced to the banyans, "your property amounts to considerably more than fifty thousand pounds. This is all in the power of the great Sahib Clive who is the captain of His Royal Majesty of Great Britain . . ." And at Sahib Clive's bidding, very much against his will but obedient to Clive's firm orders, the Hindu went on: "Sahib Clive restores all your property to you. And he bids me tell you that you may return to your business and carry on your trade in full security. You have only to hand over to him as much as he needs in the way of provisions for the troops. He demands provisions for five hundred men for two months. My sahib orders you to bring the necessary quantity of rice, meat, beans, sugar and salt to the citadel."

And the merchants praised the Sahib as a wise and upright man, rejoiced in the security which he had granted them and gave him what he demanded.

"Why this forbearance, Captain?" asked Lieutenant Revell. "The troops would be glad to be able to plunder the town."

"I need the good-will of the citizens of this town and avoid revolts. Ought I to increase the number of my enemies?"

It was soon proved that the capture of Arcot had borne the hoped-for fruit. Rajah Sahib appeared, sent by his father Chanda Sahib with seven thousand men, to win back Arcot. Frenchmen also appeared among the crowd encamped around the moats of the citadel and cutting off Clive from all communication with the outside world.

"If de Gingens keeps his eyes open he will attack Chanda. Perhaps at this minute he has already broken through the ring and set off on the march back to Madras," cried Clive when he caught sight of the besiegers.

Then he ordered a sally. With half of his men he fell upon the enemy troops to terrify them into flight and destroy them. It is true that he attained his end but he lost two officers, Lieutenants Glas and Revell who had ventured too far forward and who fell, wounded, into the hands of the enemy. Thirty-one Englishmen remained on the field.

As Clive was marching back one of the miracles which were so frequent in his life, occurred. Lieutenant Threnwith noticed a native aiming a weapon at Clive. The Lieutenant jumped forwards and turned the weapon aside. The shot missed fire but the Lieutenant fell, hit by a bullet from a second Indian.

Once more death had been challenged but had not appeared.

"No more sallies. They are useless and only weaken our strength!" declared Clive as he returned to the citadel.

"The enemy will think we are frightened," objected Maskelyne.

"Let them! There is a false fear just as there is a true fear and false courage just as there is true courage. False fear and true courage belong together."

Then he issued the order that not another soldier was to show himself on the ramparts or at the loop-holes with the exception of the sentinels.

When the enemy returned on the following day, as the French were putting their guns in position and the first shots were falling on the citadel, Clive said to Maskelyne: "Apart from the men who are working at the cannons we have four hundred men for a wall a mile long. That means that each man has a strip of wall five paces long to defend. It can't be done! Yes, if we could double our numbers . . ."

"... we can double our numbers," answered Clive. And he sent for all the Indians who lived in the fort and asked them whether they were willing to help him.

"We fear thee and thy white devils, great Sahib," replied the Indians, "but greater than our fear is our veneration for thee. Therefore do with us according to thy will."

Then Clive had the Indians taught how to load weapons. From now on an Indian citizen stood behind every soldier and while the latter fired, the former loaded a second gun for the next shot.

"Our firing power has been doubled," Clive said contentedly. "Do you see now what a good thing it was that we satisfied the inhabitants instead of plundering?"

But the longer the siege lasted the weaker the garrison became. Diseases crept in and a shortage of provisions appeared threateningly on the horizon. Without the help of a doctor, without any medical remedies, without sufficient food, without any comforts whatsoever, Clive defended a fort which under close examination was nothing more than a heap of stones gathered together for an emergency.

Also Clive was again attacked by the pains which had tortured him before he went to Calcutta. The unbearable heat, which brooded over the ruins of the fort throughout the interminable hours of the day, seized him and gripped him as with burning hands. Hot shivers shook his body and the intolerable pains kept boring and burning their way afresh into his brain. But he forced down pains and shivers and fought the sickness as fiercely as he fought the enemy. He set his teeth lest anyone should say that the strength of him who bore the responsibility was giving way and the fits of depression from which he suffered should be spread among the soldiers.

When the supplies of rice were running low, the sepoy sent a deputation to Clive. The men bowed low, Sala-

amed and said: "The warriors are devils, great Sahib, but they cannot stand the sun and also they need more food than we. Therefore we beg thee: Give us in future only the water in which the rice has been boiled for your soldiers. We will content ourselves with what has been poured off. But thou shalt resist thine enemies."

Touched, Clive clasped the brown soldiers in his arms. Nor did they resist being touched by one who was unclean. After all, they already regarded Clive as a son of the gods.

Later on Clive went through the Indian soldiers' quarters terrified lest the exhausted warriors should become incapable of defending the fortress. One of them, called Kalinga, seemed to him to be the weakest of all. He took him with him as his servant so that he should accompany him and only carry arms in the hour of defence.

From then on Kalinga followed his Sabu Jang, doing what little he could under the circumstances to alleviate the life in the burning Indian heat with little ministrations such as looking after his clothes and weapons and preparing the rice meals.

Meanwhile all Rajah Sahib's attempts at storm had been beaten back. At last the boastful prince sought to approach Clive by Indian means. He sent a messenger to him and announced his visit.

With all precautionary measures, Clive and Rajah Sahib met at the gate of the citadel.

The prince actually promised him a large sum of money if he would surrender the citadel.

Bunda Mutal scarcely dared to translate the words. When he finally succeeded in doing so, Clive laughed loud and long. Then an expression of threatening seriousness appeared on his brow and he spoke to the Indian in these words:

"Your father is a thief, a stealer of crowns. Your army is a vulgar hoard, a mob of rogues and knaves. And you

yourself are an idiot! Otherwise you would think twice before you attacked a fortress defended by English soldiers with such a rabble of miserable wretches."

Having spoken, he turned round and re-entered the fort.

But the frightened Bunda Mutal obeyed his Sahib and through the flap of the door he shouted the translation of the most terrible speech which a European had so far ever addressed to an Indian prince. And he had not yet uttered the last word when Rajah Sahib rushed at him with drawn sabre to ram the sword down his throat. But with the last syllables Bunda slammed the flap to, and the sword stuck in the wood.

Clive knew that the next few days would prove decisive.

While his adversary was slumbering on soft cushions, Clive used to wander about the ramparts of the fortress like a ghost. He seemed to appear everywhere at the same time and it was not until day was beginning to break that he would wrap himself up in his coat and lie down at the foot of the palisades. As long as he could hear shooting he used to sleep. But when there was no shot for a long time he would wake up.

One night Bunda Mutal returned from one of his stealthy strolls round the town of Arcot and announced that the general storm would follow in a few hours. "At sunrise the day begins which the Moslems call 'Hassein and Jassein' in memory of the murder of the two brothers. It is the day of religious frenzy. Even in times of peace many a Mussulman has lost his life on this day through excessive raving. As a matter of fact they believe that anyone who fights against an unbeliever on this festival and is killed by him goes straight to Paradise without having to stay in Purgatory. Down there in the town they are eating bhang and opium or smoking hashish to work

themselves up to a frenzy and as soon as the sun rises they will attack."

"That's all right then," said Clive and going to the palisade next to the main gate he lay down to rest.

"Can you sleep now?" asked Maskelyne in amazement.

"Alexander slept before the battle of Gaugamel and Arbela" Clive answered, amused.

"Do you want to compare yourself to Alexander?"

"Only in sleeping, my dear Edmund, only in sleeping! He may have slept all the better since he was so much greater than I."

"But he had fifty thousand men against half a million Persians and you have only three hundred men against ten thousand. The odds were ten to one against Alexander, they are thirty to one against you."

"But he was fighting a pitched battle - I am only defending a fort. Besides Darijavahusch was a very different person from the miserable Rajah Sahib."

For a little while the two friends were silent. Edmund folded his arms under his head and looked up at the sky flashing and scintillating so brightly with a silvery white light that night almost became day, a natural spectacle frequently to be seen in India. Then Edmund said thoughtfully "After that, Alexander conquered Assyria and Babylonia and burned the royal palace of Persopolis."

"Why did he burn it?"

"He wanted to show the Asiatics that he was mightier than their mightiest gods ..."

"... and does one show that by destroying?"

"They say that that is so in Asia. He who holds sway destroys the temples of the native gods and builds the temples of his own gods on the ruins. The uncivilised submit to such symbolic treatment. That is why Alexander accepted the title of a king of Asia and introduced the Persian ceremonial into his court."

Clive listened to his friend in silence. Finally the latter said: "I should very much like to know how far your ambition goes, Bob. You go through thunder and lightning, they call you Sabu Jang, 'the Bravest in War', and we who have so far been despised are now known as the white devils. They will soon call you a king. Then your ambition will be roused ..."

"My ambition? I haven't any!"

Maskelyne expressed his doubt. Then he stopped short. Clive did not answer him any more — he snorted aloud.

An hour later Clive was startled out of his sleep. Some instinct warned him. He sat up, picked up the wig which he had laid aside before sleeping, put it on his head, pulled his hat on and stood up. As he was stretching himself his glance fell on the tower which shone before him, gleaming white in the moonlight. He started. Up there a light was moving, going backwards and forwards in a curious rhythm. As softly and as swiftly as he could, Clive ran to the barracks in which, as he knew, Bunda Mutal was sleeping and woke him up. The Indian was on his feet at once. And in a trice the two were running up the narrow winding staircase. When they reached the top they found the platform empty. Disappointed, they set off on the way back. Suddenly the Indian pointed to a loop-hole in front of which something was moving. "Somebody is scrambling down the outside of the tower," whispered Clive. The two quickened their pace as much as they could. When they arrived outside the tower they found the square empty. They let their eyes wander round. In the distance a bright gleam was flitting along the walls of the houses. They rushed after the glimmer for all they were worth, seized at it and caught a ragged, dirty fellow in their hands, a beggar, and called for light.

"He only has one arm, Sahib," said Bunda Mutal.

"Only one arm?" repeated Clive. He racked his memory. He had once come across a one-armed beggar

... in Madras, Paradis, the ransom treaty annulled, Ibn Batuta ... St. David, the troops were marching away, a bazaar, Ibn Batuta was speaking to the one-armed beggar again ...

Then a light was brought. Clive saw a face, recognised the features ...

"Let him be tried before the sepoys, now, straight away."

A few quarters of an hour later the storm broke. From all sides, cannon balls flew against the ramparts but especially the parts of the palisades which lay to right and left of the main gate.

Clive went from loop-hole to loop-hole encouraging his men. Behind each of his soldiers he found an Indian citizen busy with the task of loading. The defending fire swelled to an imposing force.

When Clive had finished his tour of the wall he saw how his cannoneers were struggling in vain to hit a raft which the enemy had launched on the water of the moat and which was just pushing off from the bank, laden with armed soldiers. Then he sprang towards it himself, aimed the cannon and fired. The ball landed in the middle of the raft, which upset, and the soldiers fell into the water where most of them were drowned.

Elephants were led against the gate. They wore great iron plates on their foreheads to protect them from bullets. When Clive saw the danger he called to his soldiers not to fire at the shields. He sent them away from the gate to left and right and posted them at points on the wall from whence they could hit the sides of the elephants. The fast firing which now began produced the desired effect. The animals, hit by the bullets, turned to flight, rushed into the ranks of their own men and trampled them on the ground.

Meanwhile the French succeeded in shooting a breach fifty foot wide in the wall with their artillery. In a second

Clive was on the spot. He immediately had a new earthwork erected at a distance of thirty paces cutting off the shattered portion of the wall in a semi-circle.

The attempt to take the fort by storm lasted till noon. For hours on end the yells of the intoxicated Indians sounded, the rattle of the musketry and the dull roar of the cannons.

Then the Indians withdrew and in the course of a few minutes disappeared completely from the vicinity of the fort.

When the bloody work was ended and Clive found leisure to investigate events in detail he discovered that the enemy had left four hundred dead on the field whereas his own band had only lost four dead and two wounded. Eighty Europeans and twenty sepoys had fought on his side with muskets. The number of cartridges that they had used worked out at twelve thousand bullets to the hour, an achievement which had never previously been attained.

Thus by his clever organisation Clive had not merely doubled but had quadrupled the firing power of his men. When the siege was raised on the fiftieth day of its duration, he had successfully withstood ten thousand Indians with one hundred and seventy Europeans. With the exception of their artillery activity, the French had avoided all military action and they had only taken part in the general storm as spectators.

But whether they were acquainted with Clive as a friend or an enemy the Indians declared: "There must be two different kinds of Englishmen, those whom we have seen up till now and those which Clive has shown us."

If Clive was already a legendary person among the English he now became a legend among the Indians. They called him Sabu Jang that is to say: 'The Bravest in War'. He bore the name throughout all the years he fought in India and he was never again referred to in any other way by a Hindu. But the secret which lay at the root of

this legend rested on a simple formula: he exposed himself relentlessly to every danger thereby compelling his soldiers to outbid him in heroism.

Clive was just preparing to leave the citadel when Captain Killpatrick arrived in Arcot with reinforcements of one hundred and fifty Europeans. Clive left him behind in the citadel and set out in pursuit of the enemy.

The Mahratta chieftain, Monak Jang, hastened up to Clive with a thousand men and put his warriors at his disposal.

With this warrior there appeared on the scene of the great game, a man on whom Dupleix had once based his strongest hopes. Monak Jang had been intended to destroy Clive's army. But Clive was successful and the Mahrattas deserted the cause of the French and joined the English. "As soon as we win we have friends," said Clive, grinning.

"Yesterday they were still friends of Dupleix . . ." Maskelyne wanted to protest.

"You forget that there is a slight difference between Dupleix and me. He gives his friends tasks and waits to see whether they will perform them. I shall give Mr. Monak Jang no task to perform. I shall not rely on him in the slightest. If he fights on my side, if he helps me to defeat my enemies, he will be welcome. But I will not rely on him!"

"Besides Dupleix is a coward. I hear that he says himself that he dare not go into any battle because his genius needs calm and the detonations disturb his thoughts . . ."

"Calumny, like most of what is said about a great man during his life-time. I saw Dupleix on the ramparts of Pondicherry and I know that he is no coward!"

"And why doesn't he stand at the head of his soldiers and lead them into battle?"

"What a good thing he doesn't! Who knows whether we should have taken Arcot or kept it otherwise!"

A few days later Clive might have repeated his words: "As soon as we win we have friends." French sepoys joined his army. Provided that they brought good weapons with them, the captain included them among his own troops.

The commandant of the fortress of Arni also appeared before him and presented him with a wonderfully bridled elephant.

"This is the expression of my admiration for the great Sabu Jang," said the Hindu General, bowing low.

Now Clive could have continued his march like a prince, sitting in the howdah of his elephant. But in spite of the pains and hardships which increased as a result of the climate, the fatigue and the self-imposed lack of indulgence, he denied himself any advantage over his soldiers and continued to march at the head of his army on foot or on a horseback.

Maskelyne admired him for this: "The thirsty Alexander poured away the helmetful of water which his soldiers handed to him. People will soon be comparing you with the great Macedonian."

Displeased, Clive rejected the praise. "I do what is necessary, neither more nor less. If you want the end you must want the means."

And with all the force of his great soul he bore his suffering until it overpowered him, broke him, made him incapable of thinking and acting, until even the support of his intelligence, which had so far helped him in all emergencies, gave way. If he had so far said, 'I do what I must simply because it must be done', now he asked whether there was nothing which could help him.

Then his servant, Kalinga, came to him and handed him a little brown pill which he took out of a bottle. "Eat

this pill which is made from the juice of poppies, Sabu Jang, it will help you."

"Opium?"

"It will not hurt you, Sabu Jang. Behold, all the litter-bearers eat these pills, thus they are able to cover the longest distances with the heaviest burdens. Only ..." Kalinga came close to his master and went on in a whisper, "... only ... those who do not use their muscles need to fear the drug, to them it brings sickness and madness. But to you, the Indefatigable, it will be a brother and a bride ..."

Clive swallowed the pill. And indeed, a few minutes after he had taken the drug, the pain disappeared.

And again after an hour, what a sudden reaction! The negative effect rose to a positive one and abysmal gulfs of divine enjoyment opened before him. The secret of happiness seemed to be discovered.

If Clive took the pills while he was awake his wits assembled, the scattered thoughts returned to a settled order and the rifts in his feelings smoothed themselves out. If he took the drug before going to sleep, intoxicating laudenum dreams took possession of him, varied and lovely pictures unfurled themselves before him and materialised into a wonderful reality. Awake, as in dreaming, the consciousness of existence was heightened and Clive again became capable of bearing the tremendous hardships which the day demanded of him.

When the Mahratta allies heard that Rajah Sahib was carrying a war-chest with him, they wanted to attack the prince. Clive gave them a free hand.

Since the English did not take part in the fight, the French intervened on Rajah Sahib's side. But Monak Jang led the attack of his Mahrattas with such force that he held the field, drove Rajah Sahib to flight with

all his French allies and carried off the war-chest containing a hundred thousand rupees, according to plan.

At this point Clive received information which infuriated him. The French had attacked his wounded transport and massacred the disabled men who were being taken to Madras.

"That is the last straw!" he cried angrily, "the game of hide and seek is ended!" and he suddenly descended upon the fortified pagoda, Conjeeveram, in which the French had taken up their position.

There he received a letter from his lieutenants Revell and Glas who were imprisoned in the pagoda. They wrote:

Captain,

We have been forced to write this letter to you because not one of the Frenchmen here knows any English. We are to tell you that if you attack, we two, wounded as we are, will be laid on the wall. So much for our commission which we carry out honourably. But we beg you, Captain, not to abandon your operations against the pagoda on our account.

Glas and Revell,

Lieutenants in the service of the East India Company.

Clive had breaches shot in the walls of the pagoda. On the third night the French retreated in secret, leaving their prisoners behind. So Clive recovered his two lieutenants.

Clive advanced towards Madras in forced marches.

As he was marching along at the head of his troops, the word 'Gingen' sounded in his ear. He summoned Bunda Mutal and the Indian told him that the battlefield lay not many miles away. He also mentioned the bronze column which Dupleix had erected on the battlefield and the town of Fatihabad, Dupleix' 'Town of Victory'.

Then Clive consulted Edmund Maskelyne and much as he longed to get back to Madras he decided to make a detour.

On the spot where Nasir Jang was killed he found column and town.

And he blew up the column and set fire to the town and reduced it to ashes.

Facing the ruins he said: "I know very well, M. le Marquis, that column and town were more than the expression of your vanity – that they represented a political factor, a symbol of your greatness. I have destroyed this symbol so that India shall realise that the French are not invincible since the English can destroy the sign of victory with impunity ..."

"And in the place of the legend of the invincible French" added Maskelyne, "you establish the legend of the immortal Sabu Jang."

The nearer Clive came to Madras, the faster he marched. Good reasons could have been given for this haste but Clive marched in silence until the walls of St. George appeared before him and his eyes reached the roads.

In truth a ship bearing the English flag was anchored beyond the breakers, an East Indiaman which had come from London to bring him his bride, as he hoped.

Then he separated himself from his troops, dug his spurs into his horse's side and galloped towards the town.

He rushed into his friend Edmund's rooms but found them empty.

Disappointed, he went out into the street.

A beadle was standing in front of him. "The Governor is waiting for you at once, Captain. Major Lawrence has returned from England. They are holding a council of war in the government."

Clive hurried to welcome the 'Old Gentleman'.

"That Clive was the most obstinate and rebellious creature while he was still serving as a clerk," declared Mr. Benfield, "now that he is successful he will refuse to surrender the command to anyone else."

"Major Lawrence has appeared with full powers," asserted Governor Saunders, "I am bound to recognise these full powers and to act in accordance with them."

"Then you will have to dismiss Clive," said Mr. Hornby, "in which you can count on my support. It would be a pleasure for me to show this Clive that the High Council of Madras is no more scared of him now than it used to."

Governor Saunders acknowledged this expression of hatred and rage with a shake of the head. Major Lawrence drew his little watery blue eyes together, all the muscles in his red, fleshy face tightened and deep furrows ruffled his brow.

"To tell the truth, I can't stand amateurs, people who have not learnt their jobs and who know everything by instinct that other people take years over. But Clive did not strike me as being a harum-scarum. He was fiery but tractable. I should be sorry if success had turned his head."

Then the door flew open and Clive rushed into the room.

"With whom did you travel, General? With a lady?" he burst forth, addressing the fat man.

"There were no ladies on board. — And have you no welcome for old Lawrence, Captain?"

Clive made up for the omission and shook the soldier warmly by the hand.

"Your fame has reached my ears, Captain Clive, the London papers are talking about you ..."

Governor Saunders calmed Clive: "My reports contained nothing more than the truth, my dear Captain ..."

Then Lawrence made a wide sweeping movement with his arm over the heads of the councillors and a grim laugh played round his mouth as his bass voice boomed: "... the gentlemen of the High Council are also full of enthusiasm. They sing your praises in many tones and cannot find words enough to emphasise your fire and dangerousness ..."

"Dangerousness?" Clive wrinkled his brow. Once more his brows drew together in one, thick, black bush.

Mr. Hornby hastened to intervene: "For the enemy! We meant your dangerousness for the enemy ..." the words died away on his lips.

"That's all right then," said Clive lightly and sat down.

The council of war went on.

"De Gingens refuses to attack the enemy. We must send help and fall upon Chanda Sahib in the rear. Our attack must settle the fate of India now that your deed, my dear Clive, has improved the situation ..." The Governor hesitated to finish his sentence but finally decided to utter the words which came so hard to him: "... and ... Major Lawrence will have the supreme command ..."

Clive jumped up. All eyes were fixed upon him. Everybody was convinced that he would fly into a temper, raging and defending himself in his uncontrolled way as he always did when anybody hurt his feelings.

But the dark red which swept over Clive's face, ebbed away, his tightly-pressed lips parted and in a calmer and firmer tone he said: "Major Lawrence! Who am I that I should compare myself with this warrior? I, who have had beginner's luck! Besides I'm not ambitious. I'm a makeshift soldier who was commissioned because no better one could be found!" Then he turned to the Major and went on: "I am always entirely at your service, Major. After all my success is due to your schooling, to your example, if I may say so."

Touched, Lawrence threw his arms round the captain, an undertaking which was not carried out without difficulty in view of his huge figure.

On the following day Lawrence and Clive went into the field against d'Auteuil and Chanda Sahib.

Lawrence marched against Trichinopoly with the troops he had brought from England.

Still informed about every one of the enemy's movements by his spies, Dupleix sent his General, Chevalier

Law, to prevent them from establishing contact. But the French were defeated and the fortress was besieged.

The indefatigable Dupleix sent help to the besieged. The French drew up in four separate columns:

On the island of Seringham in the middle of a large lake there were two strongly fortified pagodas. Chevalier Law entrenched himself in one and Rajah Sahib in the other.

A few miles away the old Chanda Sahib encamped on the bank of the Caveri with the rest of his army.

Colonel d'Auteuil marched from Pondicherry with one hundred and thirty Europeans, five hundred sepoy and four cannons to bring help to his allies.

Once again the English saw themselves faced by an overwhelming majority. Lawrence said anxiously: "Saunders insists that the war should be brought to an end because the expenses are ruining the company! I am supposed to attack . . . such a superior foe! I've got Chevalier Law and Rajah Sahib in front of me, Chanda Sahib is threatening my flank and d'Auteuil will attack me in the rear. A truly comfortable position!"

"We must make up our minds to something bordering on the foolhardy," Clive agreed, "we must separate. I'll march against Chanda Sahib and the French. You attack Rajah Sahib and Chevalier Law."

"Separate? The devil we will! When it comes to the final struggle you must concentrate your forces that is one of the three maxims . . ."

"Thank Heavens," cried Clive laughing, "so I have learned the third of these mysterious maxims at last!" And he reminded Lawrence how he had dealt out the first of the three fundamental rules to the young ensign in the jungle. Then Clive went on: "But I know that there is yet a fourth maxim, Major, which is above all the others . . ."

"And that is?"

"That there aren't any maxims at all – that one must always do what is necessary! We have realised that it is necessary to divide the army and we will divide it! In spite of all theories!"

And the amateur, the untrained, makeshift soldier who knew everything by instinct that other people took years over, got his own way, and the warrior, tried in a hundred battles, yielded because he really was an 'Old Gentleman' as Clive called him.

"I will let you take command, Clive. Prove that your head outweighs my maxims."

And Clive set out to march against d'Auteuil.

"He's been lucky, Clive, nothing more," said Captain de Gingens when Clive had left the tent.

Then the stout Major turned roughly on the Captain: "Been lucky? His luck is merit! You can set him any task you like and he will carry it out, undaunted, determined and cool. He's a born soldier. Without military knowledge, without being familiar with the rules of tactics and strategy he sees the way out at once with his sharp wits which border on clairvoyance and an old, experienced officer like myself can keep in the background with his maxims. Each of his measures guarantees success!"

A few days later a sergeant came back from patrol-duty. The man had performed his task well and bravely and Major Lawrence commended him. Then the sergeant said with a radiant face: "I have fought under Clive, Major."

From then on the old gentleman maintained: "You can recognise on the spot soldiers who have fought under Clive because men who have anything to do with him acquire a new character."

Clive and d'Auteuil met.

Since the day was drawing to its close and the battle could no longer be risked in the rapidly falling darkness

the two generals encamped at a distance of two miles from one another.

Clive lay fast asleep in his tent, his head resting on a box of cartridges. His Indian servant Kalinga was sleeping in another corner of the tent.

Sentries were on duty and advanced pickets posted. The troops were resting in the knowledge that the morrow would bring the battle.

The moon was obscured by thick clouds and absolute darkness lay over the plain of the Carnatic.

Then the guards noticed that someone was approaching the camp. They uttered their challenge and demanded the watchword. Since they were answered in English they thought they had returning field-pickets in front of them and did not advance against the newcomers. In a second they were overpowered. A salvo boomed out. The yells of the approaching enemy resounded.

Clive woke up. Bullets were whistling round him, hitting the box of cartridges on which he had been sleeping a few moments before. Kalinga fell down dead, struck by a bullet.

With the upper part of his body bare, just as he had been sleeping and clad only in trousers and boots, Clive rushed into the fray, sword in hand. There he fell upon the sepoy who were firing at the camp.

"Wrong direction!" he shouted to the sepoy and, "cease fire!" he roared. But the Indians did not obey. Then he struck them with the flat of his sword. One of the sepoy drew a knife and stabbed about him, hitting Clive in the forehead and the upper thigh.

Clive set off in pursuit of the man, ran through the camp after him, across the plain, on and on, until he suddenly found himself in the French camp. Then he understood. He had chased a French sepoy – the man had not obeyed because he had not known the language.

Clive was in a dilemma. But he pulled himself together

at once and did something unrivalled in the history of the world.

"D'Auteuil," he roared, "I insist on speaking to Colonel d'Auteuil at once. I have come to hold a parley – to complain about this fresh breach of the law . . ."

He found an officer who understood English and took the extraordinary Captain who had come into the enemy camp to hold a parley, streaming with blood and half-naked, to Colonel d'Auteuil.

Here Clive spoke with tremendous boldness: "You are surrounded, Colonel d'Auteuil," he cried, "I warn you not to offer any resistance to me. Surrender, or I shall cut down your army man for man, yourself included."

And so terrible was the appearance of the sun-tanned, blood-streaming man, so hotly did the fire glow in those dark eyes, so sinisterly did the bushy eye-brows threaten, drawn together, so evilly did the bare sword flash, that d'Auteuil let himself be intimidated and gave the terrifying adversary his word.

The Frenchman demanded one hour's truce to hold a council of war with his officers.

Clive granted the reprieve, bowed politely, lowered his sword and returned to his camp.

When it grew light, d'Auteuil realised that he had been the victim of a cool and daring quickness of wit, that he had missed his great chance and that he had failed to capture France's worst enemy.

Clive ordered the attack.

Since he was so weak from loss of blood that he was unable to walk, he put his arms round the shoulders of two sergeants and advanced at the head of his infantry, more carried than supported.

In the action which followed, the two sergeants fell down dead beside him simultaneously. He himself remained untouched by every bullet, on this day again . . . as usual . . .

Unable to move any further, he continued to direct the battle, sitting on a stone.

Before the English had made a bayonet charge, the French hoisted the white flag and announced their readiness to surrender. The officers were released after they had given their word not to serve any nabob for a whole year. The men were taken to Madras under guard. Clive confiscated the contents of the war-chest amounting to fifty thousand rupees and handed them over to the English Company.

When he had thus disposed of his first opponent, he turned on the second. He himself remained incapable of moving without assistance for many days. Now he made use of his elephant for the first time.

On the banks of the Coleroon, Clive climbed on to a high dam from whence he could see into Chanda's camp.

A remarkable sight met his eyes. It was the first Indian camp he had seen.

Women, children and merchants were moving about in a city of tents. Wares were laid out everywhere, protected from the sun by outstretched mats. Elephants, camels, oxen and horses were grazing in their pens; cannons and wagons were assembled in an almost interminable park. The crowd flowed through the streets, buying and selling. The soldiers were dining in the canteen tents as in city restaurants. In front of the royal tent, musicians were playing, dancing girls were leading the round, priests were intoning their religious chants and somewhere a fire was blazing whose flames were devouring the mortal remains of fallen warriors.

At this wild disorder Clive aimed his cannons.

An extraordinary confusion broke out in Chanda Sahib's camp. Terrified animals rushed in all directions, tearing up a tent here, trampling on women and children there. Those who had no possessions ran away screaming,

while the wealthier soldiers saw to the salvage of their goods. And again and again the English cannon balls forced their way in, to rout the army and cripple it.

In his tent sat Chanda Sahib, leaning his back, bent with age and gout, against the tent pole. He was sitting on the bare ground, scorning the softness of a cushion as had been his custom from his youth on and reading his favourite book, Condé's 'Mémoires'. Beside him sat his secretary. The Hindu was holding a bundle of olles leaves in the left hand and a graving-tool in the right.

The Chevalier Law came in. Chanda Sahib laid the book aside and signed to the servant. When the cushions had been arranged the Frenchman sat down and the Nabob began:

"I thank you for answering my summons, Chevalier, and for coming to me. I implore you to risk a last great attempt. You are sitting on the island of Seringham like a mouse in a trap. Cross the water by night, attack the English and I will fall upon them in the rear."

The Chevalier replied: "I can't risk any attack! My forces are inadequate. And since they are not strong enough to strike a blow with any prospect of success, I have come to suggest a way out. Your generals are prepared to betray you, but Monak Jang is ready to receive you, Sahib!"

The old man said: "Monak Jang is fighting on the side of the English!"

"Exactly! In his camp you would be safe. He has sworn on dagger and sword and will answer for your life."

Then Chanda Sahib burst out: "Who has brought me to this pass ..."

"My suggestion ..." the Chevalier wanted to intervene.

"... it doesn't show me anything but your bad conscience! The Mahratta will sell me to the highest bidder."

"If you refuse you will fall into the hands of Mohammed Ali, Sahib."

Chanda bowed his head. The European was right. The Moor knew it only too well. What was there left to consider? There was no other way out. He must trust in the luck which had stood him in good stead for ninety years. "When will Monak Jang's messengers fetch me?" he asked.

"Tonight. — So you will go with them?"

The old man nodded. Then he said: "Monak Jang would sell the Prophet for a rupee but tell him I will speak to him."

The Frenchman stood up and bowed.

Chanda bade him farewell and said: "But tell your M. Dupleix that you Frenchmen will go differently from the way you came!"

When the Chevalier had left him, Chanda Sahib said: "They are toadies and onion-skins these Frenchmen. Who seeks success dies in distress. I remain what I am." And after a little while he commanded his servant: "Summon my generals. And pay the dancing girls and send them away. I don't need them any more."

The nasal chant, the piping of flutes, the clashing of cymbals, the clanging of bangles died away, and it became quiet in the tent.

"I never needed these girls," the old man went on, "my generals enjoyed them. Since the gentlemen are going, as stubborn as mules, the dancing girls may as well lead the way."

The servant returned and announced: "Your generals await your summons, Sahib!"

"Let them come in."

His twelve generals came before Chanda Sahib, salaamed and greeted him: "Long live the month of good works and the Father of all blessings."

"I am far from reproaching you," began the old man, stroking the long, thin hair of his black beard with his crooked, knotty fingers, "yes, I should have asked you to leave me had you not forestalled me. The drums are sounding for the departure, your tents are taken down. Go then!"

One of the generals replied: "We praise thee, Chanda Sahib, thou art a great general . . ."

The old Musulman waved this aside. "He who praises and blames doubly deserves the curse of Allah. Let us talk business for it was business which brought you to me and business it is which takes you away. He who has no water washes in sand. I cannot pay you the arrears but I have had an olles leaf prepared for each of you on which my debt is inscribed. And I will pay as soon as my luck turns."

The generals agreed among themselves with a glance. At last the oldest of them replied: "One makes no conditions for those who are generous. We accept thy offer."

"We will see how far thy hand reaches," replied the second.

"May Allah undo what has happened in the past," a third added.

Chanda Sahib nodded. "Every day which takes away is followed by one which gives."

And his generals left the old Chanda with their soldiers, two thousand men in all, and went over to Clive and put their services at his disposal.

But the old Nabob said to his secretary: "Write down my will. These words are for my son, Rajah Sahib, that he may read them and act accordingly." And Chanda Sahib dictated his testament:

"My son Rajah,

Honour thyself, so shalt thou be honoured. Despise thyself, so shalt thou be despised.

Ninety times have I seen the spring, ninety times the winter. Sixty years did I lie in the field and fight but my eyes were blind and my ears were deaf. Not until fourteen years ago did I realise – my sword had struck my friends and spared my enemies. Our enemies are the Europeans, all without exception, whether they speak French or English. So I went into the field with Dupleix against the English, thinking to annihilate the Britons first and then to fall upon the French and drive them both out of India. My glory is past; my hands tremble; the fire is extinguished in my heart. Wilt thou think on me, my son? Or shall I fade from thy memory like yesterday?

Call upon the royal court; call all the nabobs together against the enemies of the Prophet who are come across the ocean. Take pitch, asphalt, sulphur and tar and pour them upon the heads of the Franks. Allah will send fire down to them. The grapes still hang high and taste bitter, in time they will ripen and acquire sweetness. And always console thyself: Him whom thou findest not in the morning shalt thou visit in the evening.

Soon I shall pass through the door which leads from the dwelling of cares to the dwelling of happiness."

And Chanda Sahib took the graving tool and signed. Then he folded the leaf together, put it in a golden case which he wore on a chain round his neck and said: „This leaf shalt thou bring to my son if the Mahratta, Monak Jang, deals otherwise with me than he has sworn."

Did Dupleix feel that his star was on the decline? that the path of his great flight was sinking? Did he suspect that the wonderful Indian apparel and all the insignia of his power had long since faded to empty theatre pomp, to opera costumes and carnival requisites in the eyes of his white and brown subjects?

When he demanded and enforced that his councillors should observe the ceremonial of Indian princely courts

and kneel down before him on the appointed occasions, the first indignant voices were raised. And M. Lafarelle and M. Miron glided through the counting houses of the trading buildings and through the boudoirs of the ladies, fanning the flame which at first was only smouldering and rejoicing at the disaster which they saw approaching.

"We must sink on our knees in front of this marquis," groaned M. Lafarelle. "We shall see him lying on the ground, this imitation nabob, a dead man!" screamed M. Miron.

Still the words of rebellion did not penetrate to the Governor's ears. But the dull roar of thunder which sounded across to Pondicherry from Paris could no longer be ignored. They did not send him any more money – so he sacrificed his own millions. They sent him a handful of galley slaves as soldiers – so he sought recruits in the squares of Europe, Africa and Asia.

"I have sacrificed my health and my money," moaned the desperate man.

"You will be victorious again, Joseph François," Jan-Begum consoled him.

"I have advanced the Company thirteen million livres out of my own pocket. And the answer? I had no right to interfere to such an extent in political affairs! It was the Company's business to carry on trade . . ."

And his wrath increased and he answered the Minister's threats with open insurrection. "From now on I accept no further orders from the Company," he wrote, "I only offer obedience to the King!"

Jan-Begum sought day and night to encourage her husband: "Bussy is victorious, darling, the north is ours!" she repeated again and again.

But Dupleix sadly shook his head, raised his eyes to heaven and cried: "Trichinopoly! Trichinopoly! I had a feeling that my great schemes would be shattered on this miserable heap of stones! But this mule, this Chanda

Sahib, and his friend Muzaffar this puppy, they must go to Arcot! The puppets rebelled against their master. They broke the wires and performed the play to an end according to their own wishes, the bunglers! That was the moment when England was lying crippled and I was playing my game with them, now they are playing their game with me."

On the roof of the palace of Trichinopoly the battle of opinions was being waged. Lawrence and Clive, Mohammed Ali and Monak Jang were fighting for Chanda's head. Downstairs in the durbar the old Nabob lay on the coloured tiles, twisted with gout and heavily bound with chains, in the very room in which he had once deceived the lovesick queen with his oath on the Koran which was a stone.

"Gentlemen, read this letter which Dupleix has just written," cried Mohammed Ali, "here it stands in black and white: 'I shall never cease to pursue Mohammed Ali as long as there is a Frenchman in the Carnatic who is able to fight!'"

"But there aren't any more Frenchmen who can still fight in the Carnatic. Colonel d'Auteuil has surrendered; England holds the field!" replied Clive.

"Don't interfere, Captain," Lawrence warned him.

"... they will kill the old man," Clive objected.

"Not our business ..."

"For a long time," Clive went on in a low tone, drawing Major Lawrence aside, "the Indians have been whispering that a mystery hangs round Chanda Sahib, he has plans of some peculiar kind. We ought to ask him ... what do you think?"

"That I should be best pleased if somebody would kill the old rogue without my co-operation. But that would be too much to hope for! So let's keep our mouths shut for the time being."

While they were still arguing about Chanda's fate, the Mahratta executioner entered the durbar and went up to the old man.

The latter raised his chained hands and felt in his clothes. "Take this to my son," he cried to the executioner, "the gold is thine, bring him the note . . ."

"The gold is mine without any errands," said the hangman and he thrust his dagger into Chanda Sahib's heart and cut his head off.

He took the golden case, opened it, drew out the olles leaf, tore it up and threw it away.

Then he seized the severed head by the beard and took it to the roof of the building.

"Res iudicata!" said Lawrence. He took Clive by the arm and went away.

But Mohammed Ali seized the head in both hands and gazed at it for a long time. "So that's what the man who killed my father looks like." And he threw the head to the executioner and said: "Hang the head round a camel's neck and let it be dragged five times round the fortress of Trichinopoly in a solemn procession."

And Chanda's head was dragged five times round the walls of Trichinopoly and the inhabitants stood on the wall and watched the performance.

Then Mohammed Ali had the head packed in a box and sent to Delhi as a token of his victory.

This head was the first to cherish thoughts of an India for the Indians. But the secret remained veiled and exactly a hundred years were to pass before this idea was thought of a second time.

Again Clive hurried to Madras, again an English East Indiaman was anchored in the roads and again he rushed into his friend, Edmund's rooms.

A young girl stood in front of him. The light grey eyes had a clear and serious look. The wealth of dark blond

curls surrounded the severe brow — just so had Bob seen the girl in his dreams.

But she saw a man standing there breathless and staring at her with golden brown eyes in which shone a dark gleam ... a man in the scarlet uniform of a captain of infantry with a scar on his forehead, his face bearded and tanned, hat and clothes covered in dust, coat and trousers torn to shreds ... he it was for whom she had travelled across the ocean, of whom she had never seen a portrait ... and she was frightened by the wild soldier who looked more like a robber chieftain than a British captain.

"I don't look like a bridegroom receiving the bride," stammered Clive. And he glanced down at himself in embarrassment.

Margaret Maskelyne held out her hand to him. Clive seized it and it lay, small and white and soft, in his own.

"You have really come ... I knew it. I firmly believed that you would come ... simply because I asked you to ... in letters ..."

"There was more force in your letters than in other men's faces," replied the girl. Her words were simply uttered as a statement and there was neither love nor recognition nor any other feeling in them.

Then a noise arose outside in the street, swelled, advanced nearer and nearer, penetrated into the room, filled it completely. And from the yells of the crowd emerged the cry: "Long live Clive!"

The girl glanced anxiously, the man angrily, at the window. Citizens, merchants, and clerks, soldiers, women and children, white-skinned and brown-skinned people crowded in front of the house; fresh cries kept rising; arms were raised towards heaven; hats flew in the air, and now the crowd broke into the house; men rushed into the room, seized Clive and raised him on their shoulders to carry him away.

"Three cheers for the victor of Arcot!"

"Three cheers for the conqueror of d'Auteuil!"

"Three cheers for the vanquisher of Chanda Sahib!"

Clive freed himself by force. Men and women seized his hands to shake them and to overwhelm him with praises.

But then the noise died down. A man who towered above the people by a head forced his way through the crowd. Citizens and soldiers made way respectfully.

Governor Saunders entered the room, went up to Clive, held out his hand to him, drew him to him and stammered words of thanks and congratulation, spoke about honour and country, and Clive, who looked confused, could not defend himself from the thanks.

When the crowd had withdrawn, Saunders went on speaking. He was standing with his back to the window and did not notice that someone had stayed behind — a girl who was looking about her in horror with large eyes and showing every sign of fear.

"I am terribly sorry, my dear Clive," began the Governor, "to have to send you straight back into the field. This Dupleix is a Jack-in-the-box. The devil only knows by what means he has set his new army on foot, how he has replaced the destroyed battalions with his magic wand. Four companies have entrenched themselves in Chingleput and Covelong. If we do not strike at once and nip his hopes in the bud we shall lose all that we have won through your actions, my dear Clive . . ."

Clive sought to draw the Governor's attention to the girl with a gesture but Saunders misunderstood the movement and continued to address the Captain:

"Don't refuse my request, Clive. I hear that your health has suffered. I know how great the sacrifice is which I demand of you. But I have no one else. Lawrence must go to Golconda. Bussy is there conquering one province after another!" And in the tone of a father speaking

to his son, Saunders added: "I am not asking for myself, Clive, I beg you for the Company, for England!"

Now Clive took a step forward and went up to the girl. The Governor turned round and bowed somewhat taken aback. Clive gave the lady's name and said she was his fiancée.

Embarrassed, but quickly pulling himself together, the Governor wished the girl happiness. Then he ran out of words and only managed to produce a few incomprehensible syllables, apologised for his zeal and his blindness and took his leave. "I beg you not to miss the High Council, Captain . . . you can always make up your mind there. The sitting begins in half an hour."

And he retired.

The girl seized her hat and coat to leave the house.

"Do you want to go?" asked Clive who felt distinctly that he was not equal to the situation.

"Please excuse me!" answered the girl.

And Clive saw that she was struggling with tears as she went on: "I have made a mistake . . ."

Clive stared nonplussed.

"... yes, I have made a mistake. I must beg you to forgive me with all my heart. But I can't marry you. You are a great man - famous. Your country counts on you . . . I came to marry the merchant Clive . . . but you have just been called a hero, a vanquisher of other heroes . . ."

"I haven't sought fame. It all came without my doing anything . . ." Clive tried to object and it sounded like an apology from the bottom of his heart. He covered his eyes with his hand. What did he long for more than modest happiness, the humble existence of a merchant who sees to his domestic affairs? What was further from his desires than heroism and the pride of victory? "I only did what I had to . . ." he began again. But his voice failed him.

The girl said: "It was contrary to our agreement. Who am I that I should dare to stretch out my hand to you . . ." and she turned to go.

Then Edmund came in. Brother and sister fell into one another's arms. When Clive saw his friend he took fresh courage. "And whether I am victor or vanquished am I not still your brother's best friend?"

"My best friend — you are that and remain so into all eternity, Bob," cried Edmund, "and now go away, Bob, and when you have washed and shaved and combed your hair, you can come back. If you only knew what you looked like . . ."

Taken aback, Clive passed his hand over his face.

"You needn't be ashamed of your scars," interrupted Edmund deliberately misunderstanding his friend, "they make up for you in fame what they take from your face in beauty! And now go! Or do you think I'm going to give my sister away to a robber?"

Once more Clive glanced into the girl's eyes. And he noticed how well-known and familiar those eyes were to him. It was Maskelyne's look, the bold, clear look of his friend that met him. Then he laughed.

And now Margaret laughed as well in spite of herself. Dumb, vanquished, the victor left the field.

In the old, unfriendly church of Madras in which he had so often sat as a young clerk, full of gloomy thoughts, Robert Clive knelt beside Margaret Maskelyne and they became man and wife. Edmund Maskelyne, the brother, and John Walsh, the cousin, were present at the wedding as witnesses.

This took place on the day on which Clive went into the field as the leader of an army of thieves and murderers, the scum of the galleys which had just been landed. And

with this army he was to conquer the fortresses of Chingleput and Covelong for England.

At the first shot fired by the French the extraordinary army scattered to all the winds and the General chased over the plain to catch his musketeers one by one and bring them back to their duty. He had to search for days before he found the last of his men. They had hidden themselves at the bottom of a well.

It took him weeks to make men out of poltroons. When this task had been accomplished he stormed into one fort after the other, destroyed Dupleix' companies and drove the remnants to flight.

And to the chain of victories which he had forged for the glory of England he added the forts Chingleput and Covelong as two new glittering links.

Again he paid for his victory with some of his health, again he took refuge in the little brown pills, the legacy of his servant, Kalinga, and the roaring in his brain subsided, and, since he had performed his task, he returned to Madras.

Weeks of pure, untarnished happiness followed. At last, after years of fighting, marching and conquering, he welcomed hours of peace.

Now there was no more thought of fate and pacts. The man Clive stood there ready, no longer inclined to surround himself with ghosts. Like all young people he was convinced that he was master of his own fate and able to arrange things in accordance with his own wishes. The share of luck which he required had fallen to him.

Naturally under these conditions the attitude of parents and relations also improved towards Bob Clive. They ceased to regard him as a good-for-nothing and began to admire him. Letters filled with words of pride, concern and love reached Clive and he read his father's lines aloud to his young wife.

“Dear Son,

I feel lonely in my retirement. And finally in order to hear whether you were winning new victories I went to London to ask after you in Leadenhall Street. The newspapers compare you with the greatest generals, with Condé and with Charles the Twelfth. In India House I was told that the Company was thinking of honouring you. So I was the first to learn it. At a public dinner they drank to the health of General Clive as they call you here . . .”

Thus the father wrote proudly and he did not remember that to ‘Rogue Bob’ he had once added ‘Idiot Bob’ and had said. “He makes progress but in evil”.

And Bob also forgot the insults and mortifications of past years. He sent his father a little packet of precious stones for the old man to sell to a jeweller in order to make life easier for himself and the mother.

But Clive’s happiness was soon clouded over. The fever again set in and fresh, splitting headaches troubled him more terribly than before. The tropics demanded their sacrifice.

“You must return to England!” declared Governor Saunders, “otherwise you will do yourself a harm that can never be repaired”.

“My work is only half done,” objected Clive, “Lawrence is still in the field . . .”

“I insist on your going to England to win back your health!”

Finally Clive gave way.

The old Mosesum paid out his fortune to him which had increased to fifty thousand pounds in the meantime. Clive took the sum with him, arranged what was to be done with the rest of his possessions and belongings and went down to the yellow beach of Madras with his Margaret.

Here the people were gathered, the cannons thundered, the garrison fired a salute and the High Council with Mr. Hornby and Mr. Benfield at their head honoured the

departing pair. Mr. Hornby, in particular, could not shake his former clerk sufficiently by the hand or tire of assuring him of his especial admiration and gratitude. Governor Saunders made the farewell speech:

"Captain Clive, you have been the first to lead the English flag to victory. Your example has shaken us out of the stupor in which we lay until you conquered Arcot. The fame of English arms in India rests on your victories!"

And while three cheers were drowning the roaring of the waves, the coolies seized Robert Clive and his wife, raised them on their foam-covered shoulders and carried them out to the boats.

And soon the dunes, walls, roofs and towers of St. George sank on the horizon and the waves carried home the ship which bore Clive and his good fortune.

VI.

The era of great bliss, which was to be the happiest of his life, had dawned. London received the twenty-eight-year-old Bob as the victors of great battles are received. The people welcomed him with jubilation; the press dedicated ecstatic articles to him; the Company gave him a dinner and as a sign of their gratitude, presented him with a sword set with diamonds, "valued at five hundred pounds", as the newspapers reported.

"I will only accept this present," Bob Clive declared, "if the same honour is awarded to my friend Lawrence!"

The Company acquiesced and a diamond-studded sword was likewise sent to the 'Old Gentleman'.

Then Clive took his young wife to Hope Hall, and Uncle Dan, whose life was already on the decline, had the pleasure of seeing his little Bob as a great man and a happy husband.

From Manchester, Clive went to Styche to visit his parents and to greet his childhood haunts.

How different from his departure was his return! He

was not one of the many who died of fever in the land where the pepper grows even though sickness had not been absent and his health had suffered severely. But in the calm of country life he found the desired convalescence, his tropical pains disappeared and he recovered the full possession of his strength.

He also saw the merchants of Market Drayton again still standing in front of their shops with the same notices and signs above the door. All the wrath and all the bitterness which he had once roused was turned to admiration. The old stories were dug up, the anecdotes about the apples and pennies, about the drained-off cess-pool, about the church tower and all the other little pranks which the nine year old 'Robber Bob' had performed exactly twenty years before – but the tone in which the worthy citizens referred to the deeds had undergone a fundamental change.

Clive freed the old family seat of Styche from the mortgage so that house and land became his absolute property. He set aside an annual income of five hundred pounds for his parents. He also bought them a carriage and insisted that they should use this means of making their life easier. His brothers and sisters and Margaret's relations were likewise overwhelmed with gifts.

To make the happiness complete, Margaret gave birth to a son a few months after their arrival.

So Bob Clive had now become a respected citizen and since he had a moderate-sized fortune at his disposal, could do what he liked. He rented a small house in London, lived in accordance with his position and observed his English world with open eyes.

And it is a crazy world which there swirls over him in wild eddies! London, the greatest city in the world after Paris, can compare with the French capital in liveliness, bustle and depravity. There can scarcely ever have been another such wanton, gay, disorderly and contradictory

vanity Fair as the Thames city in the middle of the eighteenth century which amid interminable amusements sets about becoming the capital of an empire.

On the throne sits George the Second, of the House of Hanover, King of Great Britain, but barely mastering the English language, a wild, violent man, small in stature, a proud sultan, devoted to the enjoyment of life. The influence of his mistresses is in no way second to that of those of his royal enemy, Louis of France. The irascible little Regent clenches his fist threateningly at his courtiers, flings coat and wig on the ground in fits of rage and calls anyone who dares to express another opinion, a thief, a liar and a rogue.

To his dying wife, who begs him to marry again, the weeping husband replies: "Non, non, j'aurais des maîtresses." The Queen cries: "Pleecease, pleeecease!" and the royal sinner kisses the dying woman's lips in frenzied grief. Then he leaves the corpse and goes on sinning.

Like this King, the capital hurls itself into the arms of unlimited pleasure. In elegant, gaily embroidered clothes with long, lace ruffles hanging from the sleeves, with snuff boxes and fans in their hands and red heels under their shoes, this proud society advances towards us from gates which win the admiration of the whole world. Candles gleam and violins play and the painted men and women perform mocking and dreadful farces in the theatre of life. There is no end to the abundance of precious stones, table silver, splendid carriages and silk-upholstered sedan chairs. Fashionable hotels keep their doors open day and night and London Society assembles in the 'Vauxhall', the most prominent restaurant of the time.

But outside the gates of the city, little children are executed for having stolen apples and purses; criminals are pilloried in the squares while the people stream into the theatre where David Garrick is playing Shakespeare.

Art and science are enjoying undreamed of prosperity.

Dozens of weekly magazines appear, familiarising people with the achievements of philosophy and the natural sciences or dealing with politics, literature and the theatre. The British Museum is founded. Händel, now nearly seventy, is already blind so that he can no longer compose but he still plays his oratorios and concertos. Henry Fielding institutes the light novel; Lawrence Sterne writes his remarkable autobiography; Adam Smith lays the foundations of standard political economy; Joshua Reynolds becomes one of the most important portrait painters.

The authors and poets sit in cellars. Samuel Johnson, the half-blind, mad, athletic journalist, philologist and scholar, devours his roast hare, already bad and cooked in rancid butter to suit his taste and wipes his greasy hands on the coat of his newfoundland. Then he goes to the House of Commons for he writes the parliamentary reports for the 'Gentlemen's Magazine' and mocks the great of the kingdom under pseudonyms which everybody recognises. Meanwhile his wife, a dreadful woman wearing gaudy dresses and covered in thick cosmetics, drinks ale and enjoys being called the fairest and most cultured of beings and the most charming of creatures by her half-blind husband, the famous Johnson.

While the number of atheists increases, piety deteriorates to hypocrisy and depravity, and public morality reaches unheard of depths; while vice displays itself and levity is rife, a handful of determined men conquer the world. Sir Robert Walpole defends his people from the clutches of the King and curbs despotism; Pitt hurls his inspired and inspiring speeches in the faces of people and Parliament. Side by side with an irascible King and a corrupt House of Commons, these statesmen fight for the freedom and prosperity of the nation.

It was a strangely assorted world which presented itself to Clive's eyes. He was not blind to the heights and depths of this life and he admitted that the wonders of

London were in no way inferior to those of India. It was impossible to pass by this witches' sabbath without risking a little dance. Mr. and Mrs. Clive were also seized by the wave of general feeling, dragged away and borne along by the whirl of London Society.

The victor of Arcot became acquainted with the War Minister, Henry Fox. The latter persuaded him to stand for Parliament.

Clive followed this advice. But at that time elections could only be carried on with large bribes. The candidates used to give the voters huge banquets and many a constituent dined himself to death at the electoral feast. In small circles where there were only ten or fifteen electors the individual man had a chance of being able to make a small fortune out of his vote. It was also the custom to smuggle electors in from neighbouring districts.

So Clive had to put his hand far into his pocket and sacrifice the greater part of his fortune.

Fox and Sandwich supported him. The latter, a handsome, blue-eyed man of fashion and a passionate gambler, was that same Lord Sandwich who could not tear himself away from playing and who therefore had a piece of bread, butter and meat brought to the gambling table and thus invented that kind of slice which made his name famous even outside England.

Clive was elected but the election proved his doom.

Between Fox and Sandwich on the one hand and the Prime Minister, the Duke of Newcastle, on the other, there was bitter enmity. Clive had counted on Newcastle not turning against him because Margaret's father and the Duke were acquainted with one another.

But the Prime Minister thought otherwise. "Clive already has a certain importance as the victor of Arcot. I cannot possibly allow the Opposition to strengthen their prestige," said Newcastle and he contested the election.

The Election Committee refused to recognise the young

Member of Parliament. Fox and Sandwich immediately intervened on Clive's behalf. Now there broke out between the two parties a struggle for Clive who suddenly found himself in the role of a ear of corn which is destined to be ground between two millstones. Both sides became more and more heated and the dispute finally developed into a trial of strength. At first Fox and Sandwich were victorious, for the Committee recognised Clive's election and the young Member of Parliament entered the House.

At this Newcastle involved the whole body of members in the affair. The Newcastle-ites and the Fox-Sandwichites were more or less equally strong. Fox and Clive hoped that the Tories, who were numerically weak, would hold aloof from the division. But their hatred for Sandwich burned more fiercely than their contempt for Newcastle. In order to strike at the Prime Minister they voted against Clive.

Thus Clive's first political appearance ended in a defeat, caused by nothing but greed and irony.

"My Parliamentary adventure," Clive was compelled to assert, "surpassed all the vicissitudes and surprises in a life which has had no lack of them."

If Clive had hurled himself into the stream of pleasure and the whirl of politics with a certain satisfaction he was now seized by a strong aversion for all this activity. India seemed to him like a Dorado of homeliness and respectability. His old preference for the simple life and the acquisition of property revived.

Meanwhile his family had increased. A second child had been born, a poor, sickly, little boy who caused his mother a great deal of anxiety.

This family had once more to be protected against the storms of life. And Clive was seized by a strong desire to see once more the yellow sands of Madras.

All worries about the inclemency of the climate and the prospects of again having to suffer the torture of the

dreadful disease, paled before the desire to have another chance of accumulating wealth.

Margaret walked restlessly up and down the nursery. Again and again she bent over the cradle of her sick child, anxiously waiting for the fever to abate.

With hasty steps Clive came rushing into the house. The happiness which had appeared on his face during the eighteen months of his stay in London had disappeared and given place to an expression of excitement.

"I have just come from the Company," he began in a whisper after he had beckoned Margaret out of the nursery, "they have made me a new offer ..."

"India?" asked Margaret and Clive noticed the horror which this word roused in his wife. Margaret went on speaking: "We must take the children with us ... in the terrible heat ... expose them to the dangers of tropical diseases? Impossible!"

"It is still more impossible to stay here ..."

"The money?"

Without a word Clive bowed his head.

Margaret had known for a long time that Bob's finances had been in a bad state since the adventurous struggle in the House of Commons. "No way out?" she asked, bravely keeping back her tears. And she herself gave the answer: "It must be so then! The children shall stay here ..."

"And you?" Clive asked anxiously.

Then Margaret threw her arms round his neck and whispered: "I shall stay with you, Bob, come what may."

The noise from the street came into the room and the lights of the lanterns which the pedestrians held in their hands flitted over the walls as the couple held their council.

Clive spoke of his delight at being able to ensure the happiness of a quiet, simple life for his family as a result of the Company's contract. "I have been promised a salary

of seventy pounds and given the position of Governor of the fortress of St. David under the control of Madras. Pigot has become Governor there. I know him from my first expedition to Trichinopoly and shall certainly get on with him. Position and salary are included in the bargain. Then there is the trading ..."

He painted the prospects offered, in glowing colours but then made up his mind to tell the whole truth: "The Company has hired royal troops from the War Ministry for a fixed sum, a whole regiment, the Thirty-Ninth Foot. Lawrence, the 'Old Gentleman', is still scuffling with the Chevalier Law on the plains of the Carnatic. Now the Company has decided to settle Dupleix and to depose the Subadar of the Deccan, Salabat Jang..."

"You must go back into the wars, Bob, back into the jungle, into the dusty plains, back into the fight, back into the fever?"

"The King has appointed me a Lieutenant-Colonel of the British Army. The commission expressly emphasises the fact that my authority only extends to the troops of the East India Company – Colonel Aldercorn will lead the Thirty-Ninth – but I assume that the royal troops will also fight under my command since I know the Carnatic ..."

Bob did not need to press Margaret, she yielded to her fate. It was decided to let the children stay with relations, to accept the contract definitely and to travel at once as the Company requested.

The nearer Clive approached to the coast of India the more assiduously did he concern himself with the new task which lay before him. Now he would complete his work – fight out the duel with Dupleix to the bitter end.

Dupleix! The thought of this man seized Clive, took complete possession of his whole mind. Passions awoke, the old tendency to violence and the will to win were strengthened. The task took on sharper and sharper

outlines and Clive recognised more and more clearly the ways and means which must be employed to annihilate the French. His desire for trade and the simple life faded steadily as he drew further away from the coast of England. The soldier did not need to renounce the acquisition of gold – from time immemorial wars had been bound up with large financial transactions. The yearning for military fame became stronger and stronger. The soldierly passions, which had been lulled for a time, took a fresh hold on Clive and a complete change set in.

When the ship hove to in Bombay and soldiers and cannons were unloaded, Clive set foot on the Malabar coast conscious of being entirely a soldier and nothing but a soldier. In the weeks which now lay before him he wanted to force on the final decision. The Marquis Dupleix must be compelled to abandon the field and Lieutenant-Colonel Clive would hold it.

M. Godeheu who had just come from Paris, invested with full powers by the Company, appeared before the High Council of Pondicherry.

M. Dupleix was enthroned in the president's chair, clothed, contrary to his usual custom, in European dress, with a white wig on his head and shoes with the red heels of the nobility on his feet.

M. Godeheu had a leather portfolio handed to him by his servant and laid it down in front of him. "My dear and honoured Councillors of Pondicherry, I hereby show you the full powers which make me Governor-General of India ..."

"Do you wish to imply that I am relieved of my post?" interrupted Dupleix.

"That is a fact."

"May I ask the reasons?"

"I am at your service, Marquis. The immediate reason is the Company's present financial position. Not a single

ship has brought any money or wares of appreciable value to France in recent years . . .”

“... but none have brought any help for me from France either! I have sacrificed my fortune to the Company and have an acknowledged and established claim to fifteen million livres which I have advanced to the Company.”

“You will have an opportunity of discussing your affairs with the Company in Paris. Apart from this M. la Bourdonnais’ memoirs have appeared. The Admiral has proved his innocence and been released . . .”

Silently, Dupleix’ lips formed the syllables: “That . . . cur . . .”

M. Godeheu went on speaking without noticing this: “As I have said it only remains for me to relieve you of your post.”

Then M. Dupleix laughed and cried: “We have been independent for a long time. I have repeatedly informed the Company that I only accept orders from the King.”

M. Godeheu took a document out of his portfolio and laid it on the table. “This decree ordering your removal, is a royal decree – it bears His Majesty’s signature.”

The Marquis turned quite pale and stared blankly at the sheet of paper from which the great, round, red seal shone up at him like a huge drop of blood. But he quickly recovered control of himself and a smile played round his lips. Directing his little black eyes to heaven, Dupleix only uttered the words: “Long live the King!” and his voice sounded firm and his red heels tapped on the floor as he walked past the councillors with a dignified inclination of his head and left the room.

Having reached his apartments he laid aside the European dress for which he had long had an antipathy. He set about writing a letter to M. Bussy in which he told him what had happened and charged him to serve the new master just as faithfully as he had served him, “for the glory of France.”

"The worst of it is," he said to Jan-Begum, "is that we haven't a single rupee left. We must sell our diamonds, first and foremost the fan and crown of the Carnatic ... that you bore, Jeanne, when we entered Pondicherry ..."

"We shall not sell them, darling, I have a better use for those jewels which are unparalleled in the whole world, they shall open the gates of Versailles to us ..."

So spoke Jan-Begum and so she showed that even in the greatest misfortune she did not cease to have faith and hope.

But her husband cried: "What a pity that I am not a dramatist, I would make you the heroine of a play which would show men how a great, little woman recovers from every catastrophe and overcomes every misfortune by the strength of her soul."

And with the same smile which he had shown the councillors when he said, "Long live the King," M. Dupleix left the house.

But for weeks he still wandered about the town like a ghost, in the attire of an Indian prince, with all his orders, a picture of misery looking for its shadow. And again and again he repeated the words: "Trichinopoly! Trichinopoly!"

He heard about the negotiations which Godeheu was carrying on with Governor Pigot and about the treaty which was concluded and in which France ceded all her possessions in the Carnatic. Then he shook his head and found no other words of criticism for this treaty than: "One can only be sorry for Governor Godeheu if he puts his name to this madness." But he was told in reply: "Governor Pigot has only insisted on one condition, namely, that M. Dupleix should leave. At this price England has renounced territorial acquisitions and restored all districts to the nabobs."

At last the Marquis, accompanied by Jan-Begum and Chonchon, who had now grown into a young lady, went

on board the 'Duc d'Orléans'. He left India where he had lived for thirty years and took nothing with him except the little portmanteau containing a crown and a fan.

A few of the councillors to whom he was bound by ties of kinship or friendship, accompanied him to the beach.

But M. Miron could not refrain from watching the departure from a distance of a few paces and observing loudly that M. Dupleix was leaving debts amounting to twenty-two million livres behind him. Triumphant, he remarked: "I always said he would come to a bad end with this imitation nabob business. Thank goodness I'm not one of his creditors!"

So M. Dupleix began the struggle for the fifteen millions which he had lent to the Company. He did not yet suspect that he was doomed to play the extremely thankless part of a scape-goat in the political theatre of Paris.

In one of the loam huts the Indian author, Tebulle Hamond was sitting and under the deep impression which the fall of the French Nabob had made upon him, he wrote in his chronicle the words: "But our nabobs will ask: 'What do the French think? They dismiss M. Dupleix? As a result of this they will lose their honour and their possessions for we cannot possibly deal with a Governor who does not understand our conditions. M. Dupleix understood them. But now people see that the French are neither so powerful nor so generous as they wanted to make us believe. The English have certainly the upper hand over them, therefore we must be on good terms with the English'".

Of Jan-Begum they said: "The clever woman made her husband pay dearly for the use she had been to him with her precise knowledge of the Indian courts and languages and her remarkable talent for political intrigue and negotiations."

Thus France, enraged by the momentary financial straits deprived herself of a man who outweighed a whole

army. The Marquis would have been invincible if France had stood behind him as England stood behind her men.

As Mr. Pigot said when he concluded the treaty with Godeheu: "The main thing is that we get rid of M. Dupleix! This treaty compromises England just as much as France but I have my country behind me!"

As a living memorial, Dupleix left behind him the columns of brown-skinned Indian soldiers who were marching for British or French interests in every part of the country, on the coast of Malabar no less than in the Carnatic and Bengal. These Indian troops were the child of Dupleix' imagination. "This idea will decide the fate of India," Paradis had predicted. The prophecy was fulfilled.

Clive himself was an indefatigable promoter of the use of Indian soldiers. He was always especially fond of his sepoys and his brown warriors clung to him with loyalty and respect.

And even today, sepoy regiments still fight, not only in India but everywhere where British interests are at stake. They appeared on the Western Front in the Great War as in the struggle for the colonies.

The English and French colonies had concluded peace. The great adversary was dismissed from the game, having been brought to his fall by his own countrymen.

And suddenly a vacuum appeared before Clive. The goal which he had appointed for himself had disappeared; the change which had begun could not be completed. But the stored-up energy sought an outlet. The troops felt exactly the same as Clive.

So people looked round for military action, ready to seize upon any dispute and to render the outlet possible which the officers and men demanded.

A goal was offered on the Malabar coast which seemed more suitable than any other. On the steep crags, high

above the cliffs, was enthroned the fortress of Geria the strongly-fortified, ancient nest of the Malabarian robbers who used to swoop down like sea eagles from their lofty eyrie and seize merchantmen of all nations in their claws. Their swift, heavily-armed ships formed a constant danger to trade.

Moreover the assailants had the best reasons for risking the undertaking. They could pride themselves on rendering a valuable service to humanity.

The enterprise really began with an English council of war whose one subject was: If we win how shall we divide up the huge booty, which is to be expected? The conquest of the nest promised a tremendous profit. All sorts of things must be accumulated there since Geria had been used for storing up valuable goods for a hundred and fifty years. The prospects were extremely attractive.

"As commander of the land army I demand for myself and my troops a share equal to that of the fleet," declared Clive.

Admiral Watson passed his carefully manicured hand over his well-curled wig, looked at Clive in horror with his great, blue eyes and opened his little mouth which otherwise pouted continually: "Lieutenant-Colonel, you can only receive as much as is due to your rank. I shall not agree to incorrect precedence in the distribution of the spoil. I must uphold the dignity of the Admiralty."

"Rank ... correct ... dignity ... You forgot to mention the fourth word included in your vocabulary, Admiral - ethics!" retorted Clive with biting sarcasm.

"All right, ethics!" said Watson, far from noticing the mockery.

Then Clive banged on the table with his fist. The blow had far-reaching effects. The army officers stormed at the marine officers and it would not have taken much to turn the council of war into a general fight.

But Admiral Watson's vocabulary contained another

word on an equal footing with the other four. This word was certainly the most foreign of all to Clive. It was, 'compromise'. The Admiral came forward with his proposal: "Since a Lieutenant-Colonel is equal to a Rear-Admiral in rank – and therefore under a proper Admiral – I cannot possibly allow you to have an equal share, Mr. Clive. On the other hand, since I appreciate your claims I suggest the following way out: We will divide the spoil in the ratio of three is to two and I will give you back half of the extra fifth which I receive."

Clive laughed heartily and accepted the proposal with pleasure.

Thus rank, correctness and ethics were all satisfied by a compromise but dignity was certainly on Clive's side.

The stronghold was conquered. Thirteen white men, unfortunate travellers who had served the pirates as slaves for years, were released.

Clive's share of the spoil amounted to five thousand pounds.

But Margaret bore her lot in quiet patience far from her husband's wild exploits. A letter informed her that her second child was dead. Her first-born was living in the distant homeland; her husband was on the way to Madras. Truly the quiet happiness of which she had dreamed had not fallen to her lot.

The first encounter with Admiral Watson was soon to be followed by a second.

As Clive entered the Water Tower of St. George he was summoned – once again – to a council of war.

He hardly found time to see his old acquaintances. He greeted his two friends, Edmund Maskelyne and John Walsh. Mosesum rendered him an account of the increase in the wealth which Clive had left with him. Pale little Dick Stone squeezed Clive's hand and he saw Mr. Hornby swaying along in his litter followed by six fan-bearers,

a living sign that the old punkah-mania had not yet died down.

In the High Council, Clive learned of the incident which had taken place a few weeks before in Calcutta. This incident was the external cause of the greatest change not only in Clive's life but also in the development of India.

As protector of the 'Indian Eden', the eighteen-year-old Surajah Dowla sat on the throne of Murshidabad. This youth's character roused men's feelings even in India, the land of terrible despotism. Nobody felt sure of his life in the vicinity of this vicious boy, devoid of all compassion. Cutting off birds' feet and breaking their wings, pushing thorns up men's finger nails and gloating over his victims' convulsions of pain were among the daily amusements of this capricious dipsomaniac of a boy who never showed his heroism outside his harem.

Surajah Dowla had hardly mounted the throne when he attacked the weakly fortified stronghold of Calcutta with a gigantic army.

His grandfather, the famous and highly-esteemed Nabob, Allwar ed Din, had constantly exhorted him with the words: "Defend yourself from the whites!"

"I'll destroy them," cried the young Nabob, "that is the best way of defending myself from them."

He blockaded the town.

The Governor of Calcutta, a weak man by the name of Drake, who was entirely devoted to trading, defended the town for several days. During this time he came to the conclusion that he would be unable to hold the fort owing to his lack of military experience. So he announced: "Let everyone, merchants, women and children, leave the fortress, take his moveable goods and go on board the warships which are lying close to the walls of the fortress."

The order was obeyed. Governor Drake was the first to convey himself to safety. He embarked with the

majority of the inhabitants. Only a few brave councillors and the officers and men of the garrison remained behind.

The Indians began to fire cannons at the ship. Whereupon the fleet set sail and cast anchor a little way downstream. Those who remained behind were deprived of their last means of escape. The garrison, consisting of one hundred and ninety soldiers, a dozen undaunted merchants and one woman, was determined to defend itself to the last. The command was taken over by Councillor Holwell, a brave, stout-hearted man.

On one of the following nights, the Indians set fire to all the houses lying outside the fort and threw fire-brands into the stronghold so that even in the interior of the town a large number of houses went up in flames.

Among the most prominent Indian merchants who lived in the White Town, Fort William, was a Gento or member of that widespread religious society of Bengal which relies on the Shaster, the great, ancient, holy book written by Brahma himself. This merchant was Omichand, an exceptionally clever, active and wealthy man who, as the holder of several monopolies throughout eastern India, dealt in a wide range of wares. Drake had intercepted letters from which it emerged that Omichand was in close touch with Surajah Dowla and was conveying information to the latter about the precautions taken by the English. Whereupon Drake had taken the Gento prisoner and had had his house occupied by a guard of twenty men. When the English soldiers entered the harem, the peons, the merchant's armed body-guard, were roused to such an extent that they put thirteen of their master's wives to death to save them from dishonour.

The Gento, Omichand, bore the misfortune which had befallen him, with dignity. The loss of his gold and his jewels grieved him more than the death of his wives. Since he followed the Indian custom of being on both sides, he approached the temporary Governor, Councillor Holwell,

and offered to open negotiations for peace. Letters were drafted in the Persian tongue and thrown over the palisades. Whereupon an Indian appeared with a flag of truce and negotiations for surrender followed. While Holwell was still holding a parley, the Indians surprised the town, captured it and took all the white men prisoners. Naturally Surajah Dowla seized everything of value including Omichand's confiscated property amounting to the value of four hundred thousand pounds.

The prisoners were laughing and joking to cover their gloomy position. Meanwhile Indian officers were searching the town for a suitable place in which to accommodate the English. Finally it occurred to them to use the criminal jail for their purpose. This jail consisted of two separate narrow holes with a ground area of twenty square feet, each with two small, barred windows looking not into the open but onto a wide, covered-in space.

All the prisoners, one hundred and forty-five men and one woman, were now forcibly squeezed into one of these rooms, which was known among the English by the name of the 'Black Hole'.

The unfortunate souls could only be accommodated in this space when they remained standing, packed closely together.

As a crowning misfortune this was an unusually sultry night even for the Indian climate. The pressure of bodies became unbearable; despairing exclamations were heard. The brave and cool-headed Holwell encouraged his companions: "Keep your bodies and minds calm! That is the only way to survive the night!" He called to an Indian officer through the window and offered him a thousand rupees if he would distribute the prisoners between the two rooms. The Indian went away and came back with the news that the Nabob was asleep and he did not dare to waken him.

The agony of the victims increased. Profuse perspiration, stabbing pains and intolerable thirst and want of air set in. The prisoners took off their clothes, and waved their hats about but they did not succeed in wresting an appreciable movement from the air. They decided all to sit down at the same moment and to stand up again at the word of command in order to produce a draught. When the experiment was carried out a number of the unfortunates were incable of rising.

Some of the Englishmen lost their reason and began to rave. The room shook with the cries, complaints and weeping of the despairing people.

Shortly before midnight the first deaths took place. In the terrible heat the dead bodies went into a state of putrefaction with extraordinary speed. A pestilential stink spread abroad. The death rattles of the dying were mingled with the curses and prayers of the despairing. By midnight a struggle of all against all had broken out.

Only those by the window managed to keep up their strength to some extent. Everybody pressed towards the openings. Some climbed to the gratings over the heads and shoulders of those by the window for at the back of the room the stench was already so fearful that nobody could breathe.

Meanwhile the story of what was transpiring that night in the Black Hole spread round Calcutta, and crowds of Indian soldiers appeared in front of the windows holding lights up to the gratings. They made merry over the writhing of the dying and their laughter was mingled with the shrieks, groans and laments of the victims in a horrible symphony.

Towards morning one of the Nabob's envoys appeared at the window and asked whether Holwell was still alive as Surajah Dowla was awake and demanded to treat with the Councillor. Happy that Holwell would help them,

the prisoners dragged him to the window and he carried on the negotiations.

Shortly afterwards the cell was opened. But it was still more than half an hour before the survivors, twenty-three in number, had worked their way over the bodies which blocked the way to the door.

"When they re-emerged into the light they looked like ghosts," the chronicler informs us.

Holwell was taken before the Nabob. Here he learned the reason why the Nabob had instituted the torture. The Nabob was annoyed because he had only found forty thousand rupees in the Government chest. He thought that the greater part of the treasure had been withheld from him. He announced that he had only instituted the torture to loosen the tongues of the English and to move them to betray the hiding place in which they were hoarding their treasure. Now he learned from Holwell that the Government chest had, in fact, only contained the amount which had already been found since the treasures had been taken on board the men-of-war by Governor Drake.

Among the surviving twenty-three was Mrs. Carey who had refused to leave her husband. Meanwhile her husband was one of the dead and she, as an exceptionally beautiful woman was destined for the harem of Mir Jafar, the chief general in Surajah Dowla's army.

This is an account of the occurrence which has found its way into history under the name of 'The Black Hole of Calcutta'.

The members of the High Council were filled with a tremendous indignation when Mr. Manningham, the envoy of the citizens of Calcutta, informed them of the terrible event.

"Succour for the unfortunate survivors who are abandoned to starve in the fishing village of Fulta!" cried Mr. Manningham, beseechingly.

"Reprisal! A punitive expedition!" shouted the councillors.

"Let us concentrate our entire forces, go to Bengal with all the warships and attack the Nabob in his capital of Murshidabad," suggested Clive. "We shall recapture Calcutta and bring the hysterical, perverse, spoilt and destructive boy to his account!" And in his mind's eye he saw Calcutta and the time he had spent there. He saw the 'Indian Eden' before him and the feeling swept over him that a great opportunity had come.

All the officers and councillors were agreed that help must be sent to the unfortunate victims and Calcutta recaptured.

But no agreement could be reached as to who should lead the punitive expedition.

Mr. Pigot proposed Clive whose ability he had seen for himself.

The first to oppose him was Colonel Aldercorn, the commander of the Thirty-Ninth Foot Regiment who had come to India with Clive. Aldercorn objected to Clive having command of the King's troops on the grounds that he was only in the service of the Company.

"I have been commissioned by the King and not by the Company and therefore have the right to lead royal troops," retorted Clive.

Aldercorn insisted on commanding his own regiment.

Pigot supported Clive and appealed to the Colonel: "You are a great general, Colonel, but the Indian wars are a thing apart ..." And he described the difficulties which would arise from languages, the caste laws and co-operation with the sepoys.

Since Aldercorn would not give way, Watson suggested a compromise: "Put three companies of your Thirty-Ninths at our disposal, Colonel Aldercorn, and dress these soldiers in sailors' uniforms which I will gladly provide, that will help both sides. Lieutenant-Colonel Clive will receive the

troops which he urgently needs and you, Colonel, can proudly maintain that no royal British soldiers have served under an officer of the East India Company."

Clive grinned – typical Watson!

Aldercorn was satisfied and the extraordinary arrangement was carried out.

But the dispute continued. As the senior officer in rank, Admiral Watson claimed the right to carry on with the Nabob the political negotiations which would clearly be necessary in combination with the military operations. He discussed the matter with Governor Pigot. "Calcutta is subject to orders from Madras," Pigot explained, "I can only recognise treaty agreements in which I have taken part ..."

Again a compromise was reached. A special committee was set up which was to be presided over by Admiral Watson and to have Clive, Drake, (the Governor of Calcutta) and some of the councillors as members. This committee was to have the right to make independent decisions for the special needs of the reconquest of Calcutta and was only to be loosely dependent on Madras.

Then a new difficulty arose. – It had become known that a fresh outbreak of war was to be expected between France and England and that a gigantic French fleet was already assembled in Brest with the intention of attacking India.

"Under these circumstances we cannot possibly divest Madras of troops," declared Watson.

"I need the entire English forces," announced Clive, "the Marquis Bussy and the Chevalier Law still have strong forces in the north of the Carnatic, that is, close to the southern boundaries of Bengal. Thus in the event of war I should have to fight on two fronts – in the north against Surajah Dowla and in the south against the French ..."

The councillors raised a hue and cry at the plan. "We have already lost Madras once!" screamed Mr. Hornby and

his face clearly indicated the horror which the thought of a fresh war aroused within him. "Shall the events of 1746 be repeated?" added another. Practically the whole Council joined in the protesting cries of Mr. Hornby and they went over to descriptions of the sufferings they had endured.

Naturally Admiral Watson joined the councillors' party.

First Clive threatened, stormed and cursed. Then he condescended to make sharply defined suggestions. "Before Bussy can appear on the Coromandel coast and before the French fleet arrives, I shall be back from Bengal!" he cried and everyone knew he could be relied upon to sweep the enemy from two battlefields in the space of a few weeks. "The monsoon blows from the land to the sea until April. Until then there is no need to fear the French fleet!"

These words turned the scales. The feeling of security returned and with it reason and common sense.

Clive carried the day and insisted upon the immediate departure for Bengal.

Clive realised that his hour had come.

The change to a soldier who was no longer content to be a make-shift soldier had been completed with irresistible force. From the inconspicuous, dull, grey cloth coat of the merchant had sprung the warrior who wore uniform with pleasure as the only suitable clothing.

Clive felt that all that he had so far done had remained mere piecework. He had indulged in skirmishes, won a battle here, taken or defended a fortress there. What had he achieved? At best he had improved the situation.

Dupleix! What would he have done? He would have seized the Black Hole outrage as a pretext to overrun the country with war and to conquer it.

To conquer! Bengal, Bahir and Orissa, this whole gigantic land ... to ... conquer ...

The conversion from soldier to general ... from general to conqueror!

However much Clive considered, the thought once born, the desire once woken – it drew him away, dragged him forwards with an irresistible force. To be a successor of the conquistadores, to subdue lands and nations without asking for whom or in whose favour one risked one's life – to the man of thirty-one this seemed the really great, the highest and final aim of his life.

That this change involved the necessity of letting the first step be followed by a second and a third – since he alone can conquer who unites political vision with strategic determination – this realisation was only to occur to Clive some weeks later but then to thrust itself all the more forcibly upon him.

A man came up to him, a youth of twenty, a clerk by trade. Clive eyed the young man, who was called Warren Hastings. And the General remembered the moment when, himself a wretched clerk, he had stood before Lieutenant de Gingens. Clive included Warren Hastings in his troops.

Then he marched through the dense jungle, over swamps and morasses; he forced his way with a knife through the thicket; he had to cross innumerable water-courses. For lack of draught-animals the soldiers dragged the guns forwards themselves and carried the cannon balls on their shoulders. The army marched for fifteen hours without a break.

Again Clive caught the fever, again he clutched at the little brown pills and again they helped him to bear the fatigue.

In a dried-up river bed, a mile and a half from the fortress of Budge-Budge, the first fort of Calcutta, Clive pitched his camp.

Immediately beside him slept his four companions: his adjutant, Edmund Maskelyne, his Lieutenant and secretary, John Walsh, his interpreter and agent, Bunda Mutal and Murad, his servant.

The Bengali attacked the sleeping army by night. Wakened by the musketry fire, Clive ran out of his tent. He succeeded in all haste in forming a loose battle order. But the enemy occupied the bank and with it an excellent position and caused the English severe losses by an unbroken fire.

Clive realised at once that under no circumstances dare he evacuate the camp. His troops could not have endured the return march. He was faced by the danger of a general disbandment.

But they could not achieve their end merely by a determined resistance of the attack. The losses would increase from hour to hour and finally a general assault by the Bengali would lead to disaster owing to their numerical superiority.

These were the thoughts which ran through Clive's head as he rushed up and down the front, encouraging his musketeers. When he had convinced himself that he could carry on the resistance for another hour or two, he sought refuge in an attacking manoeuvre. He separated a company from the left and right wings and sent them to work their way round the enemy and fall upon them in the flank. He himself would resist the attack with the weak centre until the wing groups had come into contact with the adversary and relieved him.

"Stand firm!" he cried again and again to his soldiers. "Stand firm until your comrades come to your help!"

The bold flanking movement succeeded. In the semi-darkness of the moonlight night, the two little armies managed to reach the enemy and attack from the side. The Bengal General, Monik Chand, fell in the rain of bullets and his elephant took to flight, dragging the army with it. The Bengali retreated head over heels to Calcutta.

The impression made by the defeat was all the greater since the Bengali were thoroughly conscious that they had not only been twenty times superior in numbers but had

also attacked from a far better position and yet been defeated.

Thus with one blow, Clive had procured that ally who had so far always been of great service to him – fear of the enemy. Again the words reached his ears, this time in the Bengal tongue but corresponding literally with the exclamation which the southern Indians of the Carnatic had uttered: “There must be two kinds of Englishmen, those whom we knew up till now and those who have come with Sabu Jang.”

Meanwhile Major Eyre Coote was investing the little fort of Budge-Budge, the most advanced fort of Calcutta. Here the Thirty-Ninths were fighting, dressed in Admiral Watson’s sailors uniforms. By a coincidence there was a drinking bout the very night before the storm so that the majority of the muskateers went into battle drunk.

Among the drunken grenadiers was a wild Irishman by the name of Strahan. In his intoxicated state he reeled onto the ramparts of the fort and chanced upon a spot which happened to be undefended at that moment. To his great astonishment he found himself in the middle of a troop of Indian soldiers. Brandishing his revolver, he yelled: “The fort is mine!” and the Indians threw down their weapons and ran away.

At this moment his comrades reached the rampart. At the same spot at which Strahan had entered the fort the assailants streamed into the stronghold and Budge-Budge was soon in the possession of Major Coote.

On the following day Strahan was summoned to answer for his drunkenness to Admiral Watson.

Hat in hand, the Irishman looked anxiously at the Admiral.

Watson’s little mouth gathered into a pout. With the pathos of a Baptist priest he said: “Strahan are you aware of the fact that you have been guilty of a severe breach of discipline?”

The Irishman nodded as a sign that he was prepared to accept his punishment.

Watson considered it necessary to continue his admonition: "Strahan, Strahan, how could you get drunk! Why did you do it?"

"To give myself courage, Admiral," answered the Irishman, scratching his head. "At any rate I suddenly found myself in the fortress. And I mean to say – it didn't do any harm, my capturing it ..."

"But you captured it in a way that was neither correct nor worthy of an English soldier!" Watson really felt it his duty not to overlook the matter. After the Admiral had depicted the dreadful consequences of dipsomania with all the force of his inherent morality he threatened Strahan with a punishment whose nature and extent he still wanted to think over.

"Good!" announced Strahan, "but if I have to run the gauntlet I'll never capture a fort again in all my life, even if I live to be a hundred!" And he added several times; "By God, not another fort, not another fort!"

Fort Budge-Budge had been stormed. Clive could capture Calcutta without difficulty.

In the abandoned villa of a councillor where he had taken up his quarters the news reached him that the great war had broken out between France and Prussia and that the German Empire, Austria and Russia were fighting against Frederick the Second to whom England alone had promised her alliance.

Thus the war had become necessary on two fronts after all: against Surajah Dowla and against the French. And Clive's entire forces on land comprised one thousand men.

Clive considered. Admiral Watson, the Committee and the High Council of Calcutta – with these Clive had to

reckon – they would all be of the opinion that Surajah Dowla should be left alone since England was satisfied by the recapture of Calcutta. The councillors would never be prepared to carry on the struggle with the Nabob at a time when the settlement had to be defended against the Marquis Bussy and the Chevalier Law.

But Clive wanted more – he wanted to conquer the whole of Bengal.

Perhaps one really ought to consider leaving the Nabob unmolested until the French had been driven from the field ...

An idea occurred to Clive, took possession, of him, carried him along with irresistible force. The darkness dispersed, the way became clear – they must form an alliance with the Nabob, then in company with him they must drive the French out of the country and finally they could turn upon the ally ...

A daring idea – to offer an alliance to the man who had the massacre of the Black Hole on his conscience ... Ought he to have moral scruples then? No! A thousand times no! The moral point – that was the end they hoped to reach. The end must justify the means ...

Clive caught the sound of palankeen music. He went to the window and looked down into the street. A sedan chair surrounded by fan-bearers was approaching at an easy trot. The white wig, the hat, the light blue coat of the occupant ... no doubt – it was Watson coming along the street.

The Admiral got out at Clive's house. And Clive decided at once to brave the storm and to assure himself of the Admiral's support.

The latter entered with a ruffled brow, allowing himself no time for a formal greeting.

"You call yourself Commandant of the fortress of Calcutta, Lieutenant-Colonel Clive?"

"Have you any objections, Admiral? Do you desire another Commandant?"

"Let me begin by asserting that it is I who appoint the Commandant. It would have been correct to await my arrival."

Badly shaken, Clive collapsed into a chair. The poor brain of the man sitting in front of him contained no other care but who should command this town which was riddled with bullets and reduced to ashes!

The Admiral gave vent to his indignation: "You must evacuate the town at once! I will not suffer the Company's troops in Calcutta so long as I bear the responsibility. Only a royal officer should be Governor of the fortress and only royal troops should hold possession of the town!"

"I wouldn't dream of evacuating the town," announced Clive.

The Admiral jumped up: "Then I shall have your troops fired on and compel you to evacuate Calcutta with cannon balls ..."

Overwhelmed and disarmed by a lack of foresight which exceeded all expectations, Clive stood up. For a moment he seemed paralysed. But then the veins stood out in his face, the blood rushed to his cheeks, his eyebrows drew together and that dark gleam which made him so terrible to friend and foe threatened in his eyes. And already his hand went swiftly to his left hip ... but paused in the middle of the movement ... not because the sword was missing did the hand stop short ... Clive had altered ... His expression changed. The glow died out of his eyes. From the corners of his eyelids thousands of thin little lines sprang out, shot apart towards forehead, temples and cheeks, the lids drew together, the lips were screwed up, an almost roguish smile lit up the features of the young man who now in his prime and for the first time for twenty years wore the expression of the superb rascal as though

he was just about to play a trick on Aunt Bay and the merchants of Market Drayton. So the hand did not continue its way but passed once or twice over the folds of the coat-tail and finally came to rest on the back. With his head on one side Clive looked up at Watson, who was considerably taller, and with the most charming smile in the world, he said: "Is there no way out, my dear sir . . . What about a little compromise?"

Watson hastened to express his fundamental readiness for any compromise. "I could . . . I would . . . I should . . . perhaps I ought to take possession of the town in the name of His Majesty and then hand over the full powers of the Company to you? What do you think? Would that not be correct? Each of us would have preserved his dignity and . . ."

"... and the order of rank would have been respected," Clive interrupted with wild enthusiasm, "and ethics! ethics . . ." suddenly he could go no further. No logical connection between the handing over of Calcutta and ethics occurred to him . . . So he broke off the sentence and after words of friendliness, obligingness and sympathy had closed the gulf which separated him from Watson, and he had thus smoothed out the way to an understanding, he brought forward his plan. He spoke about the further military operations as simple tasks and finally mentioned the word 'alliance' in connection with the name 'Surajah Dowla'.

But there he had struck the wrong person! Watson puffed himself up immensely. The tremendous quantity of ethics and dignity which he had stored up, burst out of him: "An alliance with the murderer of the hundred and twenty-three? Never! Never! Never!"

"Then what about . . . a little compromise?"

"Never! Never! Never!" sounded through the room again. "In ethical questions I know of no compromise! Here the finest feelings are at stake . . ."

"The revenge could be postponed, the reprisal deferred," Clive tried to stem the tide of feelings. But the great words flowed in a continuous stream from the Admiral's mouth – responsibility to God and His Majesty the King, the wrath of the House of Commons, the dignity of the white races, the indisputable obligations of civilisation – all that and a great deal more.

"I don't commit any follies for the sake of lofty principles," Clive retorted firmly. He realised that not even the most far-reaching adaption to the depths of brain-power or the heights of empty phrases would achieve his end. But before he had reached another decision, Lieutenant John Walsh rushed into the room and announced that the Bengal army had encamped outside the gates of the town, close to the castle and park of the Gento merchant, Omichand, and that the assault was to be expected on the following day.

"There you have your ally!" said Watson with his little pout.

"That's exactly what I mean – first we defeat him then we treat with him, lest he should think of joining the French. My entire programme – Defeat and then treat . . ."

"Street methods." Admiral Watson openly expressed his contempt.

"Exactly! I agree entirely, Admiral. We have to deal with street arabs and we'll treat them as they deserve!"

Admiral Watson saw nothing further to discuss. He had decided that the alliance should not be formed and that settled the matter as far as he was concerned. "How lucky," he thought, "that this Clive is not authorised to form alliances on his own responsibility, otherwise Admiral Watson would now be an ally of the imbecile murderer, Surajah Dowla who breaks birds' wings . . ."

And Admiral Watson and Lieutenant-Colonel Clive parted in dissatisfaction.

When the palankeen bells had rung, Clive said: "If

Watson only knew what I have in store for him!" and he laughed heartily.

Then he shouted for Edmund. "Pigot has just written to me," Edmund announced, "to say that you must retreat at once to defend Madras. He is afraid that Lawrence won't be able to deal with the French alone."

"I can't possibly leave Calcutta! We should lose all we have won. And Bengal is India – not the Carnatic!"

"We can't possibly sacrifice Madras!"

"If necessary I would sacrifice the Carnatic to keep Bengal ..."

"... which you haven't yet got!"

"... but which I shall get! It will always be possible to conquer the Carnatic and the Deccan from Bengal. And the great decision will never be made on the Coromandel coast. Every bead of sweat that is shed on the plain of the Carnatic is wasted."

"I don't believe you will convince a single Englishman in the world of that."

"It is enough that I am convinced of it. – Now listen to what I tell you to do, old man – Tomorrow I shall strike a blow at Surajah Dowla. The day after tomorrow I shall enter into peace negotiations with him. As soon as I have the slightest prospect of a treaty in my hands, you are to go to Madras, take the news of the peace to Pigot and protect me against Watson in the rear. You can also take the opportunity of seeing that I get some money at last. I lost two thousand five hundred pounds of hard-earned money in the capture of Calcutta. Since it is I who won back the fortress it is only right and proper that my losses should be made good. Please write a letter to Pigot to that effect and then tell him what I think about the committee and the difficulties which are put in my way here ..." And Clive dictated the letter to Pigot: "It does not suit the fine gentlemen here at all, that I should have anything to say. Moreover if you were here you would

take exactly the same steps as I. But nobody here has anything else in his head but complaints about the losses which he has suffered and discussions as to the means of recovering his property. Believe me, these Bengal gentlemen don't worry about anything else. They are bad subjects, one and all; they are base at heart and would never shrink from harming you and the High Council of Madras. I wouldn't associate with these people for all the treasures of Peru and Mexico ..."

Edmund and John went into their room to carry out their task.

Clive remained alone.

Again and again he assured himself that the foundation of all operations lay in a speedy victory over Surajah Dowla and a speedy peace with him. Only then would the time come to drive the French out of the country if not with the Nabob's help, at least with his indulgence. Finally they could throw the rope round Surajah's neck and take Bengal from the strangled nabob ...

Meanwhile, however, the Nabob had an army of more than eighty thousand men at his disposal of which the cavalry consisted of northerners, sons of the Himalayan Mountains, Tartars, Afghans and Persians, real brave, strong, well-disciplined men, skilled in war – a different race from the cowardly and miserable host of the deceased Chanda Sahib ...

And the more Clive thought about what was to be done the more clearly did Dupleix' image press to the fore in his mind.

Clive investigated all the moves which the Frenchman had made in his great game, eagerly seeking out parallels and examples which could be adapted to his own position.

The demon Dupleix took a firmer and firmer hold of Clive and the great enemy of yore became the fixed foundation of the world of his imagination. He was prepared to pay and to stake everything on the great business

— money and strength, life and health, peace of soul and conscience.

Thus the next step was taken! General Clive had turned into the politician, Clive. In a little while the storm of feelings would die down, the emotional impulses would be hardened, the questions of right and wrong would be silenced and turn into questions of possibility and utility.

The politician Clive was complete — the speculator on a grand scale who thinks in terms of provinces and countries. Clive was getting nearer to Dupleix in his aims and objects as well as in his technique and methods.

Involuntarily, Clive's lips formed the words. "It's a great game I'm beginning . . ." And after a little while he added: "I may hope to achieve what the Marquis could not attain because he was only a politician and not a strategist as well. I should be just as unsuccessful if I were only a strategist and not a politician."

And yet there was a difference between these two great gamblers. Clive must of necessity — if he once set on this way — aim considerably higher. Firstly because it was not mere, bare ambition which drove him then because he was different by nature, he was harder and tougher — all in all — because he had the greater character.

But for this very reason the final and greatest change had necessarily to follow one day — the change from an ordinary conqueror and politician of the Dupleix type to a statesman who asks great questions in accordance with the inner meaning of all political and strategic endeavour and answers them in his own way.

The plan matured. The few hours which remained before the approaching battle were filled with discussions. Bunda Mutal appeared. Names were mentioned, scarcely audibly whispered in the room. Characters were examined and weighed up; reactions and future behaviour were anticipated; difficulties were ferreted out and their im-

portance estimated; moves and counter-moves were laid down until the plan was completed in all its details.

At Surajah Dowla's court in Murshidabad lived the councillor, Watts, a cunning, eloquent man with a thorough knowledge of India. He was still a prisoner but he could easily change his role and turn into an envoy. Undoubtedly Watts was the man to guide the capricious nabob as he wanted. He would negotiate and submit one proposal after another to Surajah Dowla. Whether these negotiations for peace and alliance were brought to a successful conclusion or not, in any case they offered an admirable side scene behind which the real, serious discussions could be carried on.

"Shanavaze, Shanavaze!" cried Clive time and time again. "Where shall I find the general who will fall on the Nabob from behind at the critical moment?"

But here Bunda Mutal's knowledge came to an end.

Perplexed, Clive strode across the room. He stopped by the window ... The Nabob's army was encamped outside the gates of the town ... close to the castle of Omichand the great merchant through whose wonderful garden Clive had wandered five years before ... Already at that time he had been told about the adroitness, cunning and avarice of the Gento.

It was so stupid of Drake, a coward and a donkey, to have dealt so harshly with the Gento! One needed such men and one forgave such men everything. In the long run all spies were counter-spies. Each of these people worked for both sides. One knew that; one respected it and made use of it. Now the Nabob had released the Gento from imprisonment, now Omichand would naturally work exclusively for the Nabob ...

Clive tapped his forehead. Fancy making such a mistake in calculation! Whether Omichand would serve the Nabob, Surajah Dowla or the Lieutenant-Colonel, Clive better was a question of the price laid down.

Certainly Omichand was the man to hunt for the general whom Clive could set about the Nabob's ears!

"Fetch Omichand," he ordered his cousin, Walsh, "with a little skill you will track him down and be able to reach him..."

"For heaven's sake, Bob," warned Walsh, "you aren't going to put yourself at the mercy of Omichand, that bloodsucker, that greatest of all rogues. Since Drake offended the Gento..."

But Clive waved him aside. "Do as I tell you," he said, "and tell the merchant Scrafton to be so good as to call on me - I have a mission for him..."

And Walsh hurried away to fetch Omichand.

The Gento came in and salaamed.

Clive looked in amazement at the still comparatively young, elegant, yellow-skinned man who in spite of his youth had become a notorious and influential gambler for the fate of India. The prominent cheek-bones, the heavy eyelids with the long lashes, the broad nose, the inevitable thin, black, twisted moustache, the turban-like head-dress, the coloured, richly embroidered muslin clothes, the golden, high peaked shoes, the curved, diamond-studded sword - truly a prince from the 'Thousand and One Nights' had come to him in the flesh.

To honour his guest and to observe the precepts of his caste, Clive carried on the discussion standing. For many hours the conspirators whispered together and it was midnight before the plan had taken shape.

Omichand firmly refused to reveal the name of the general concerned in the affair until the reward for his pains had been fixed. And he demanded no less than three million livres for this service.

Walsh and Scrafton drew back when they heard this sum. In the faint light of the candle Clive could see how

they turned pale. But he did not hesitate to promise the amount for a second.

At last the Gento gave the name. "For various reasons the most suitable man is Mir Jafar . . ."

"... the General Field Marshal?" whispered Clive none the less a little shaken by this revelation, "the Commander in Chief?"

"He is a son-in-law of the old Allwar ed Din Khan and therefore the uncle of Surajah Dowla. In order to set the crown of Bengal on his head, Mir Jafar will not hesitate to desert his nephew in battle and kill him. And the country will thank him, glad to be freed from the inhuman Surajah. While he was still young Mir Jafar assured me that he never entered his nephew's seraglio or tent without fearing that he would be murdered . . ."

"If the Field Marshal attacks Surajah Dowla in the rear that'll settle the Nabob . . ."

"There will only be one difficulty," went on the Gento, "Surajah has each of his generals watched by spies. Mir Jafar cannot do anything which is not reported to his master . . ."

Clive waved the objection aside. He had found the way long ago. Watts was living at Surajah Dowla's court. He would carry on the peace negotiations, his presence would be explained and he would find a way to Mir Jafar.

Clive thought the object of the discussion had been reached. But Omichand hesitated to leave the room. Thoughtfully he said. "I request that my claim to three hundred thousand pounds should be included in the agreement with Mir Jafar as an integral part inseparable from and on equality with the other stipulations."

Clive also agreed to this. But the Gento still hesitated. "Are you still not satisfied, Omichand?" Clive asked in a friendly tone. "You only have to speak!"

"I further demand that His Excellence, Admiral Watson should sign this agreement. You are a great general, Sabu Jang, but only the Admiral is qualified to conclude state treaties." And the Gento showed that he was as familiar with affairs in the English camp as with those at the royal court of Bengal.

Without thinking, Clive undertook to obtain the Admiral's signature.

Then the men took leave of one another.

"But Bob, how can you promise him three hundred thousand pounds? Have you got it?" asked Walsh dazed by the daring game which his cousin was playing.

"Have I got the money?" Clive asked, laughing. "You ought to ask rather whether I shall pay it!"

In the middle of the capital of Murshidabad rose the palace of Surajah Dowla. For days on end the crafty Watts negotiated in the durbār with His Grace, the boy, Surajah, who had loaded his eighteen-year-old conscience with more murders than the majority of old sinners who sat on the thrones of India around him.

The capricious boy was lying under the purple canopy, with one leg laid over the arm of his throne and using his hand to support the little head attached to a neck which was much too long and thin. As he spoke the red betel saliva dripped continually on the white clothing embroidered in gold.

Watts was lounging in a second chair, taking snuff as the other was chewing betel, and letting his words fall with that icy, nonchalant absent-mindedness which the average Englishman only acquired a hundred years later and which gives the one addressed the impression that he is separated from the other by a glass wall.

A reverse which Clive had inflicted on the Nabob's vanguard near Omichand's garden strengthened the boy Surajah's inclination towards peace and he indicated his

willingness to accept the terms which Clive offered him. He undertook to return to the English all that he had taken from them. He promised them the express right to fortify the town of Calcutta, to mint their own gold and silver coins and to receive free of duty all goods which were transported under the English flag.

Then the Nabob selected two elephants with wonderful trappings, two oriental costumes and two valuable jewels as turban ornaments and sent them to Calcutta with the sealed treaty as presents for Admiral Watson and General Clive.

Separated from the government palace of Surajah Dowla by a small river and a few streets, Mir Jaffar's castle lay towards the end of the town of Murshidabad.

While Watts was carrying on the negotiations with the Nabob in broad daylight and with all publicity, in the darkness of night he was spinning the threads to Mir Jaffar which Omichand had so skilfully knotted.

As soon as it was dark the respectable Councillor Watts wrapped himself in the voluminous folds of a Persian woman's dress, covered his face with thick veils and had himself carried to Mir Jaffar's harem in a curtained litter.

Here the eminent Persian lady was received by a eunuch and led into a cabinet. Piles of cushions from which clouds of perfume swirled, covered the floor. Coloured lanterns hung from the ceiling, incense burned in little metal vessels and every object which the veiled Persian touched, even the floor and walls – everything here was sprinkled with rose-oil. And even the lady herself had to be welcomed by letting one of the slaves pour a few drops of rose-oil into the open palm of her hand.

Before Mir Jaffar appeared, the eunuchs and slaves withdrew. But the fact that the grey-bearded Field-Marshal was not satisfied with the eighty women in his

harem but met a lady from a strange seraglio in nocturnal secrecy caused a smile to creep over their faces. And the imaginative servants' minds were already occupied with the consequences of the outrageous behaviour of the lady who would one day undoubtedly pay for the adventure with her life.

At last the keys rattled, the doors creaked on their hinges, the tapestries rustled, with which the walls, doors and windows were hung, and the Marshal entered with soft steps.

With a sigh of relief, Councillor Watts tore the veil from his face and stretched his limbs. The two men greeted one another. Mir Jaffar stroked his silvery-grey, half-length beard, opened a small box in which olles leaves, graving-tools and cheroots lay sociably side by side and invited his guest to sit down on the cushions. Watts lit a cigar to keep the hypnotizing scents away from his nose, and the discussion began. For hours on end Mir Jaffar was bent over the draft of the agreement. His large, dull, goggling eyes skimmed searchingly through the lines. Rough sketches were twisted and turned, discussed word for word, altered and altered again. And so at last in night-long negotiations, the famous agreement came into existence on which England's dominion in India is founded.

The treaty concluded "on the fifteenth of the month of Ramasan, in the fourth year of the rule of the present Emperor," accorded the English the right to settle in the three provinces of Bengal, Bahir and Orissa from which the French were in future to be excluded. It granted the Company broad stretches of land in feoff and one crore of rupees as compensation for the losses they had suffered in the taking and plundering of Calcutta. Further the payments were determined which Mir Jaffar was to make in the event of the stroke proving successful and in the event of the royal crown of Bengal and the treasury coming into his possession.

Then followed the third and most important agreement. The Marshal undertook to go over to the English with all his troops, with flags flying and music playing, in the battle which Clive would provoke – assuming that he was in the van. But if he was in the rear, he undertook to fall upon the van from behind and take the Nabob prisoner.

After this declaration, Watts expected the Moor to take the signet from his hand and seal the document. But Mir Jaffar refused: "I am the one who is risking his head, Sahib. If the document were to be found before it reached Sabu Jang's hands it would mean my death..."

The Englishman was perplexed. Was the Moor contemplating treachery?

"I am willing to swear to the agreement," Mir Jaffar offered.

"Well, swear then," said Watts, without hesitation.

Mir Jaffar called his son, Miran. He laid the Koran on his own head and his right hand on that of his son and swore to keep all the terms faithfully.

"All the same, I must insist on the signature and seal," announced Watts.

"If the document were found on you, Sahib, it would mean my death."

But Watts was not satisfied. Mir Jaffar had sworn to the treaty ... but were not the broken oaths of Indian princes, of those who called themselves nabobs as well as of those who wanted to become them, piled up in mountains higher than the Himalayas?

"I have an agent called Petrus, an Armenian, whom I trust absolutely. Nobody will suspect him of being the bearer of important documents. He will take my signet and stamp the treaty with the seal under Sabu Jang's eyes..."

Watts was satisfied. He covered his face in order to play the role of an adulterous harem woman again, got into his litter, drew the curtains to, and had himself

carried into the bazaar by the Field Marshal's bearers. Here his own bearers were waiting for him and took him to Omichand's quarters. After he had changed into European clothes, he returned from there to Surajah Dowla's palace.

Altogether it took him nearly a month to conclude the two complicated peace treaties.

The time seemed to have come to drive the French out of Bengal.

A few miles up the Hugli from Calcutta lay Chandernagore, the French fortress in which Dupleix had once worked his first miracles.

Clive's host, the Thirty-Ninth Foot, charged against this town while at the same time the English warships fired at the stronghold from the direction of the water and silenced the batteries of the fort.

After a week's siege, Chandernagore yielded to its conqueror, Clive. The latter entered the town in the early hours of the morning. Without any triumphal cries and without any pomp, he occupied the ramparts, redoubts and government building. From now on English sentries patrolled up and down the wide boulevards planted with trees which had given the town the name of 'The Paris of Bengal'.

Back in Calcutta, Clive found a Mahratta messenger bringing an offer of alliance against Surajah Dowla from the fierce warriors.

A curious feeling of distrust came over Clive as Bunda Mutal read out the finished translation to him.

"Couldn't this letter be forged? May it not have originated in Surajah Dowla's chancellery?"

The interpreter examined the writing carefully and finally confirmed Clive's suspicion.

"The Nabob is setting a trap for me! Very well then, we'll let him fall into it himself! The trick shows that he is suspicious. Let us prove that we remain his loyal and reliable allies."

And Clive decided to return the forged letter to the Nabob. He composed a covering letter in which he expressed his indignation at this offer of alliance from the Mahratta and his unswerving loyalty to the Nabob.

At this moment Scrafton appeared, having ridden over from Chandernagore through night and mist on a swift camel, to bring Clive most important news: "Surajah Dowla has announced his intention of restoring to Omichand part of the property which Drake confiscated and which fell into the Nabob's hands at the time of the conquest of Calcutta. Watts and I are afraid that the Gento is betraying the Marshal to the Nabob ..."

"Let's turn the tables!" declared Clive laughing. "I'll give you a letter for Omichand which will convince him that Surajah has knowledge of his treachery. Then you only need to tell the Gento that Surajah Dowla has promised to hang him. But if you have to take to your heels, don't leave the Gento in the lurch – bring him with you! Otherwise he will tell stories to the crowned idiot which will cost Mir Jaffar his head and me my neck ..."

And Scrafton hurried back to Murshidabad with the letters.

Watts and Scrafton went to pay their usual attendance on the Nabob in the castle of Murshidabad, armed with the Mahratta letter.

They were prevented from entering the durbar and were informed that the audience had been postponed until the evening and that they were to return at dusk.

They did as they were told.

When Watts and Scrafton entered the ante-room in the evening they were held up by Tartar bodyguards. These

demanded to search them for weapons and requested them to surrender their swords. The Englishmen brusquely refused the unreasonable demands.

After the Tartars had consulted among themselves, they led Watts and Scrafton into the durbar.

How amazed were the envoys by the scene which met their eyes. The Nabob was sitting on the throne, his legs placed properly on the floor, wearing all the insignia of his nabobship, and the grandees of his kingdom were standing behind him.

But all the doors and windows, all the walls and corners were occupied by exceptionally tall soldiers, armed to the teeth, wearing huge turbans on their heads and obviously clad in several garments to give them the appearance of specially powerfully-built warriors.

The Englishmen handed over the papers. But the Nabob threw the letters on the ground and stamped on them. At the same time he uttered unintelligible, brutish sounds, shrieking, foaming at the mouth and wildy gesticulating with his arms. It was some time before he calmed down.

Then Watts spoke and told Surajah Dowla what was contained in the two letters on which he had trampled.

When the Nabob heard that Lieutenant-Colonel Clive had rejected the Mahratta's offer of alliance, he bent down and picked up the letters with his own hands. He skimmed through the contents, drew Clive's letter delightedly to his lips and kissed it. Then he read out to his grandees what Clive had written. The letter closed with the words: "Trust me with your favour and I will be faithful to you. But always remember that if you lend an ear to my enemies and decide to break the treaties I will lay a brand to your country which all the waters of the Ganges will not suffice to extinguish..."

Again the Nabob burst out in howls of rage: "He threatens me! He dares to threaten me!" At that he whispered with his ministers and finally announced to the

envoys: The audience is closed. My chancellery will give you an answer."

Watts and Scrafton went away, Omichand slipped out of the durbar at the same time. In the ante-room he whispered to them: "Take to your heels, gentlemen, and be on your guard. The Nabob has sworn to take you prisoners and to keep you as hostages."

"And we advise you, Omichand," replied Watts, "to flee with us. The Nabob knows the role you are playing. Here is the proof..." And he handed over Clive's letter to the terrified Gento.

Pale and trembling, Omichand glanced at the lines. "For heavens sake, gentlemen," he whispered, "take me with you." Then he thought of something. "I'll just go to the treasurer first and fetch the gold the Nabob has promised me."

So he arranged to meet the Englishmen and to flee with them.

When the two Englishmen reached the street they told their servants to put out the lanterns. They hurried home by roundabout ways and took to flight.

They found Omichand at the appointed place. The Gento complained loudly that the money had been withheld from him but he decided to risk flight with them.

So they set off.

Clive awaited the return of his envoys impatiently. He was filled with unbearable suspense. He tossed to and fro on his couch, tried to sleep, put out the candles, got up after a short time, lit the lights again, seized a book, threw himself down on the couch once more and tried to read.

The sound of pattering hoofs reached his ears.

At last!

Edmund came in. He cast a glance at his brother-in-law's face and saw the terrible havoc which the suspense of the last few days had wrought there. Before Edmund

could stop him, Clive, with trembling hands, took one of the little brown pills out of the phial and swallowed it. To bridge over the time until the drug should take effect, Clive lit a pipe.

"Quick, quick! The decision from Madras!" he cried, not waiting for a greeting.

Maskelyne took off his hat, threw his sword aside, flung himself into one of the brocaded chairs, crossed his legs and rested his head on his hand so that his fingers covered his eyes. He did not want to show the extent to which he was shaken by Bob's condition.

Clive walked restlessly up and down, continually sucking at his pipe.

Thank heavens the roaring in his ears was dying down, the cold shivers were going away, the pain was subsiding.

Impatient, Clive came to a halt in front of his brother-in-law.

"Speak! Well, speak then! Can't you see that these constant cares hurt me, man, this enquiring into the moods of others, this suspense, this eternal reading of riddles. — Why do you worry me?"

Maskelyne felt in the inside pocket of his coat and produced a paper.

"First I must convey Pigot's congratulations. The High Council of Madras is very satisfied with you, it sends you thanks for the recapture of Calcutta. Pigot has sent a report to London full of your praise and fame . . ."

Clive yawned. "Hm . . . hm . . . But what about my money? Has my petition been granted?"

"Refused! With the express observation that you would certainly find an opportunity here of obtaining money without the co-operation and assistance of the councillors."

Clive again began his march. His pace became faster and faster, his movements more and more violent and every one of his steps was interrupted by a loud, convulsive laugh. The pipe had long since fallen to the floor. He

pushed it along in front of him with his foot as he had kicked stones along in front of him in the street as a boy. At last the gurgling laugh turned to words: "With the express observation! With the express observation! That's splendid! That's wonderful! That's superb! – But we'll take them at their word! And how we'll take them at their word!" Clive hurried up to Maskelyne and planted himself in front of him. He reached up and laid his great, broad hands on his brother-in-law's shoulders. It sounded almost solemn as he now began to speak: "You are the witness, Edmund! Don't forget that! It was they, the noble gentlemen of the High Council of Madras, who gave me permission, with the express observation, to obtain money without their co-operation and without their help!"

He let his hands fall and sank into a chair opposite his brother-in-law.

And Maskelyne saw clearly that this was another Clive who sat before him, a man determined to go to extremes, one who was playing for his life, prepared to risk everything for everything. Half amazed, half troubled, he watched his friend's sudden metamorphosis.

"Pigot is crying for help," he continued his report, "Lawrence is ill. They have made the 'Old Gentleman' Governor of St. David but he is too old. Pigot fears the worst."

"He'll get help as soon as I've finished my work here. For the time being I must sacrifice the Carnatic . . ."

"And in Madras there lives a woman," said Edmund, shaking his head sadly, "who has placed her life in your hands, her happiness, everything . . ."

"Margaret!" cried Clive. "Am I not sacrificing my happiness as well? Edmund, don't you believe that I'm consumed with desire for Margaret – that I'm longing for the moment when I shall see her again, bury my head in her lap?" Clive clenched his fists and banged them together so that the knuckles cracked against one another. "It's not

a case of me; it's not a case of Margaret! But if my attempt is successful I shall keep the promise I gave you when I saw her picture for the first time ... a hundred servants should be at her beck and call; I wanted to load her with the treasures of this world. I saw myself sitting on the throne of Delhi with Margaret at my side ... If my attempt proves successful they'll make me Governor-General of India." Clive went up to Edmund, lifted him off his feet, held him tempestuously in his arms. "I know, of course, that I shan't take to the grave any of the things for which I'm stretching out my hands. And yet! It gives me infinite pleasure to toss for India's crowns with India's princes. Ambition? Thirst for glory? Perhaps that too! But above all, joy in gambling ..."

Dazed by the impetuosity, overwhelmed by the flow of fiery words, incapable of recognising the goal towards which his friend was rushing, Edmund stammered: "But after all Calcutta has been recaptured!"

"Calcutta!" said Clive contemptuously. "Wait a few more days, Edmund, weeks at the most. The critical moment is coming ..."

"The opium is affecting him," thought Edmund, "I must bring him back to stern reality." Sadly he said: "Not a soul understands you, Bob. Pigot said, as well, it would naturally ..."

"Naturally? – Naturally it might very well be precisely the opposite! To imagine that everything is in perfect order in a country which has been in a continuous state of war for five thousand years – Heaven knows that needs the brains of baboons. Have we to deal with rational people in Murshidabad, with gentlemen who keep their word, with Englishmen? Whom do the councillors really think I've got to face? Do they take Surajah Dowla for a parson? Do they think he signs deeds? – The fellow is one of the greatest criminals running about God's wide earth. While the baboons are lolling about in their sedan chairs the

fellow is hatching his plots with the French, the Mahrattas and the Afghans. — And did the hundred and forty-six sit in the Black Hole for nothing, and did the hundred and twenty-three die in vain? No, my boy, these Asiatics can't be dealt with according to European laws, according to our conceptions of right and honour. They are beasts . . ."

"The Grand Mogul . . ." Maskelyne wanted to interrupt.

"The ancient and honourable peacock throne of the Timurs has become the bedside table of a dyspeptic weakling! In Murshidabad a bandit is sitting on the throne, an eighteen-year-old criminal, a sadist who breaks birds' wings and pushes nails into men's fingers, 'for fun'! No false romanticism, my friend!"

"What do you want to do?"

Clive got up, went swiftly to the door and tore it open. In the anteroom, Murad, the servant, was sitting on his mat with his legs crossed and sleeping. Reassured, Clive shut the door, came back, drew his chair close to that of his brother-in-law and whispered: "Never, not even at Arcot, was England in such a dangerous position as now. If we don't take the initiative very quickly we shall be attacked and thrown out of the country!"

Maskelyne opened his eyes wide. His lower jaw dropped. He gasped for breath.

Clive thumped him hard on the shoulder once or twice. "Calm yourself, old boy! Don't play the baboon. There's a way of saving the situation for us! I've thought about it and I've found it. What would Dupleix have done in my place?"

"Don't speak to me about Dupleix," cried Maskelyne, "I won't have you comparing yourself to that man."

Clive looked at his friend in amazement. "Why this agitation, Edmund?"

"Dupleix' fate is sealed," answered Edmund. "I've brought you the latest number of the 'Mercur' and the

'Gazette de Hollande'. You can read about it there – Dupleix and Jan-Begum appeared at the court of Versailles, the Marchioness in Indian costume, and presented the King with a diamond-studded crown and a jewelled fan. They created an incredible sensation – but they didn't achieve anything. The Marchioness died in December. And people say that her husband is "less fortunate than his wife". They let him wait in anterooms, treat him as a wretched petitioner, and deny him the money which he advanced to the Company. He lives in dire necessity in a garret. And here, read what he says in his memoir!"

Edmund handed Clive a newspaper in which an article was underlined.

Not without emotion, Lieutenant-Colonel Clive read what the Marquis Dupleix said about himself.

"I sacrifice my youth, my wealth, my life and load my countrymen in Asia with fame and prosperity. Unfortunate friends, over-devoted relations, virtuous citizens bring me their entire possessions and help me to carry out my schemes ... As a result they are now in distress. I subject myself to all legal formalities and demand the restoration of my property like the most insignificant creditor. The services which I have rendered have become fairy tales. My requests are mocked and laughed at. I am treated as the most contemptible of all men. The little which remained to me has been confiscated. I had to sue for grace in order to avoid imprisonment ..."

"How unjust," cried Clive. "I tell you, we Englishmen ought to honour this man! If ever we conquer India, we ought to set Dupleix on a level with those of our countrymen who founded our colonies ..." And after a pause, Clive went on: "I understand why you rejected the comparison. Very well, let us use another – Do you still remember how we were walking through the bazaar, we two clerks, and you told me about the proconsuls? What means did the Romans use when they, a few hundred men,

were faced by a hundred thousand coloured people, just as we are? What would such a proconsul have done in my place? He would have deposed the inconvenient native prince and put a more compliant one in his stead, one whom he held on some sort of chain, whether it be an iron spiked collar or a golden thread. I shall depose Surajah Dowla and put another on his throne."

Clive said all this in a whisper. But it was not the eager whisper of a chatterer telling secrets. It was the calm, natural, businesslike and impressive murmur of a merchant who buries himself in his ledger, who adds up his accounts and calculates his next transactions according to the possibilities of profit and loss.

But the effect on the hearer was not that expected. Edmund Maskelyne was violently shocked. "Bob, what are you saying?" he cried, almost distracted, "you want to depose Surajah Dowla, the man who rules the whole of northern India – Bengal, Bahir and Orissa, a realm greater than that of Louis the Fifteenth."

Edmund's horror had no effect on Clive. He kept to his calm, matter-of-fact tone. Indeed it sounded almost like the happy, innocent chatter of a child telling its mother about the happenings on the playground of an evening as he went on to develop his projects: "Someone has already been found who is absolutely cut out for the role I have in mind. Surajah has made enemies of all his grandees – I have taken advantage of that. One robber chief is as good as another. There is Mir Jaffar, Surajah's uncle and Field Marshal. That's the man! We'll make him Lord of Bengal, Bahir and Orissa."

Maskelyne shook his head.

But Clive's thoughts ran on unchecked. He did not consider Edmund's scruples worth answering, dispelling or brushing aside.

Edmund was a man without guile, always ready to impute the best motives to other people irrespective of the

colour of their skins. Clive saw in this the remnants of the middle-class upbringing which he himself had long since cast aside. He believed that he had grown out of that.

But Maskelyne forced his brother-in-law to remember that the surrounding world persisted in its old condition and that he was dependent on men for whom the old rules of the game were still valid. And with a single word, a single name, he succeeded in making Clive's rebellious ear accessible to his warnings. He simply asked: "Watson, does he know about it?"

"Watson!" shouted Clive and it sounded like a cry for help. "Tell me Edmund – Have I ever been afraid? Haven't I looked death in the face in a hundred battles? – And yet! There is something which makes me tremble! Not Erinnyen and Medusa – but the stupidity of this Admiral fills me with terrible fear. Omichand who helped to hatch the plot between Calcutta and Murshidabad is certainly the most cunning Hindu spy between Indus and Ganges, but I will undertake to outwit him! Surajah Dowla is certainly the most cruel and bloody hangman, but I will oppose him armed with nothing but my two bare hands though he carry dagger and revolver! What can I lose? My life, nothing more! But the thought of Watson makes me weak. Since our so-called politicians whose duty it is to set plots and intrigues on foot plaintively refuse – I, the soldier, must do what is necessary. The gentlemen of the committee play with ideas so long as there is no danger – but they never pluck up the courage to act! I have the courage to do what must be done. The agreement with Mir Jaffar will be signed in the course of this night. I'm waiting for Watts and Scrafton to bring it and I shall not hesitate to sign it."

"For heaven's sake, Bob, think what you are doing! Your name will be written on this paper for all eternity! In centuries to come people will read it with a shudder and

say: 'Robert Clive signed this. His name is attached to an infamous document.'"

"I'm not afraid of history. Future generations will realise more clearly that I only did what was necessary. Moreover the verdict of history depends on the result. If I succeed, I shall be vindicated for all time. The loser is excused by no good intentions, no sentiments, however noble."

"Bob, I implore you not to sully your hands!"

"Aren't they sullied with blood already? Shall I shrink from a blot of ink, a spot of dirt? Let the blame fall on those who let the nation's fate slip from their hands simply to keep those hands pure! – I shall implore Watson to sign. If he doesn't do it ..."

Clive broke off. His lips screwed up and kept back the thoughts which wanted to fly away, borne by violent words and which, once uttered, would sully the name of Clive ... perhaps for ever ... Some strange, unknown, mysterious presentiment rose in Clive, warned him and caused him to be silent for the moment.

A profound stillness spread between the two men who, occupied with their thoughts and fancies, stared in front of them and only returned to consciousness of the present when a faint, distant ringing was heard.

"Quick, make yourself scarce, Edmund!" cried Clive, hastily pushing his friend into the next room.

With swift, silent steps he hurried out into the anteroom.

"Murad, Murad!" shouted Clive in a subdued tone. Silently, the servant glided in.

"Go and stand outside so that you can see the whole street. As soon as you see Admiral Watson coming, come in and let me know. – And call Bunda Mutal at once!"

Silently, Murad disappeared.

The door opened; fan-bearers took up their positions; a litter swayed in and was set down. The bearers hastily

disappeared, flew in all directions like a heap of dust and lay down, scattered and at a distance, in the shade of the palms lining the road.

Clive watched the proceedings with delight. Again and again he felt the charm emanating from the sure, silent, swift movements of these lean, naked, turbaned beings. Movements which might have had their origin in the thousands of years spent in the society of the great, quiet elephants and in hunting the tiger.

At last the curtains of the litter were drawn aside. A man in a caftan, with a kerchief wound round his brow came into sight. The man got up. Now Clive saw the wide, thick beard framing the face and reminiscent of the huge beards of the Saints in the old English churches.

The visitor got up, stood for a second under the wide-spreading, gracefully swaying pole of the litter, bowed and offered Clive his hand. And it sounded to Clive as though Aunt Bay were telling him a fairy story or a pious tale when the man said in a soft voice: "I am Petrus, Mir Jaffar's envoy. Call me by my Christian name for I believe in the Saviour like you, sir, since I belong to the people of Armenia."

Clive led the visitor into the room, offered him food and drink, called him Mr. Petrus and cast greedy glances at the leather bag which Mr. Petrus wore on a strap round his neck. And Clive felt as though he were a little boy again and as though he had to wait and see whether Santa Claus would bring him a present.

Then the Armenian took the treaties out of the bag, the main treaty and the appendix, each prepared in duplicate.

Bunda Mutal read out the treaties sentence by sentence, translating them from Persian into English and making sure that the second copy corresponded to the first.

"Let us pass to the signing and stamping of the treaties, Mr. Petrus," said Clive and he picked up the pen to add his name.

But the Armenian stopped him. "The treaty still lacks the clause promising Omichand the stipulated sum," said Petrus. "My master insists on this clause being included in the treaty. He is afraid of the Gento."

"Why? Omichand has left Murshidabad so you assure me?"

"But he might return and betray Mir Jaffar, my master. My master is at the Nabob's mercy. He might easily be prevented from carrying out the little tactical manœuvre which he has arranged with you and you yourself would receive no help in the battle."

Clive stepped up to the candle to examine the documents more closely. He understood neither the language nor the writing but a mysterious feeling drove him to study the documents more carefully. Suddenly he noticed that the two copies were written on different shades of paper, the one on a reddish the other on a whitish ground. And in the same moment he saw the possibility which was offered him by the different colours of the documents — should Omichand or Watson or anyone else hinder the conclusion of the treaties.

"Add the clause, Bunda Mutal," he instructed the interpreter. He handed the Hindu one of the copies, and he selected the one which was written on the reddish paper.

"How high is the sum which I am to set down for Omichand?"

"Three hundred thousand pounds."

The Armenian jumped up. "Three ... hundred ... thousand ... pounds?" he whispered in horror.

"Certainly," answered Clive, "to be paid by Mir Jaffar."

"Mir Jaffar's treasury doesn't contain as much as that."

"It will contain more when once your master is sitting on Surajah Dowla's throne! – Moreover – Has Omichand the money already? And in what coin is it to be paid?"

"I don't understand you, sir," said Petrus. But before Clive could answer, the Armenian's face lit up and he went on: "Or might I understand you after all? You want to make Omichand wait until the climax has been reached . . ."

"First," replied Clive almost cheerfully, "I promise him all he demands and ensure myself against his betrayal. Should I, as a European, play second fiddle to a Hindu? If Omichand is capable of every villainy then I will be so too!"

At this moment Bunda Mutal finished writing down the clause on the reddish coloured document. Now he stretched out his hand to take the second copy. But with a swift movement Clive seized the paper. He went to the writing table, opened the drawer, threw the writing inside and shut it up.

Mr. Petrus and the Hindu smiled. They understood. The difference in the contents of the papers would be no less than that between the colours. Omichand would only be shown the reddish coloured sheet.

Clive had become really merry. He held his head on one side, screwed up his eyes and pursed his mouth. Little Bob had looked like that when he was setting out to play some trick. With this face the ragamuffin had collected the tribute of apples and pennies from the merchants of Market Drayton.

The two Indians eyed the Lieutenant-Colonel with unconcealed admiration. The oriental does not take such a pure, unmixed, comprehensive pleasure in any other human intellectual quality as in cunning. That applies to all the millions of brown and black skinned men who inhabit the vast area between St. Helena and the Philippines.

Now Clive had become one of them. His pleasure in outwitting the opponent was immense. Edmund should not give him instructions! He already knew what he would reply. Was not one of the greatest books which humanity had so far produced, a hymn to cunning? Did one blame Odysseus, the mighty warrior, for having sought refuge in cunning, in deceit?

"Cunning Sahib," said Petrus bowing low, but then his face took on an expression of determination. "Omichand is clever, the treaty which we show him must be signed."

"It will be signed!"

"By Admiral Watson as well? My master also demands the Admiral's signature."

Without hesitation Clive replied: "Of course the Admiral will sign as well."

The Armenian still hesitated. "And if Omichand betrays us in spite of all assurances? My master also considers that possible . . ."

Smiling Clive shook his head. "He can't betray us! Mr. Watts told Omichand that the Nabob was on his tracks and had heard of his negotiations. At that the Gento fled. Watts helped him in his flight."

Again Clive put his head on one side; again Petrus bowed.

"By heavens," cried the Armenian, grinning, "you are a Hindu, Sahib! The wily Omichand fled from a danger which did not exist . . ." And he laughed, and Bunda Mutal joined in this laughter.

Walsh came in and announced Omichand's arrival.

"Keep him for five minutes, John, then let him come in," ordered Clive. He turned to the Armenian and issued his instructions at a tremendous speed: "We must try to beat down Omichand, Mr. Petrus, in appearance! If we grant him everything he'll get suspicious. So we must raise objections . . ."

"I understand. I shall get annoyed."

"And I aggressive."

"And then?"

"Then we shall give way."

The door opened. The two separated. Omichand entered, accompanied by Walsh.

The Gento greeted Clive with every sign of respect. He hardly had a nod left for the Armenian.

"First I have to inform you, Omichand," began Clive, "that Mir Jaffar and I have come to an agreement and that we are ready to sign the treaty. In accordance with your demand this treaty will now bind the future Nabob and me to pay you the stipulated sum. But there difficulties arise. It is impossible for either of us to pay a sum of £ 300,000 ..."

"... indeed not if you take my services into consideration," answered Omichand. He took the treaty which Clive handed him and studied the final clause while he went on speaking: "You sit safely here in Calcutta, Sabu Jang, protected by your cannons. But I am in the immediate vicinity of the one who has power of life and death over me and you know what that means to Surajah Dowla. A human life is no more to the Nabob than that of a nightingale and it is one of his amusements, in fact I was present at the sport a few weeks ago when he drove wooden splinters into the flesh of some merchants and set fire to the wood."

"But you have left Murshidabad?" objected Clive.

"But I must go back, Sabu Jang. I haven't yet got the money which your Governor Drake took from me, Sahib. If you take these losses into account you won't find my demands excessive. — Think, gentlemen — £ 100,000 I demand for the risk I run at Surajah Dowla's court and £ 100,000 I reckon for the losses I have suffered."

"That would only be £ 200,000," interrupted Petrus irritably.

"I haven't come to the end of my services yet," retorted the Gento.

"I am curious to hear what else you are thinking of including in the bill," the Armenian went on angrily.

The merchant gave Petrus an insolent look. The triumph with which the traitor was about to utter the next words was already apparent. Slowly, softly, with exaggerated modesty, he went on with his estimates: "The third £ 100,000 are not for my safety but for that of your master. Remember that the threads of the whole conspiracy lie in my hands. You master's friends, who attend your highly treasonable meetings by night and appear in your Nabob's palace by day – they are all in my hands. A single word whispered in Surajah Dowla's ear would mean death for them all. This last £ 100,000 is the small price for the guarding of a great secret!"

"Blackmail!" shouted Clive beating the table with his fist to give clear expression to the anger which he had to put on in accordance with the situation.

Omichand had long since returned to the bearing of a poor, modest agent. He went on appeasingly: "His Grace, Mir Jaffar will sit on the throne and be ruler of Bengal, Bahir and Orissa. He will grant the English all the concessions they desire. You two, gentlemen, will win an infinite amount for yourselves and your countrymen. None of us have yet carried out transactions to the extent of that in prospect. Such an arrangement only occurs once in centuries..."

"... that had better be true!" hissed Clive between his teeth.

"I am only a small merchant, gentlemen. You have heard my calculations, know what the goods cost which I am delivering. It is up to you to accept the price."

For a second Clive and the Armenian caught each other's eyes; each glance was an encouragement to the

partner to force the game and bring it to a successful conclusion.

"We are in your hands," observed Clive gloomily.

"We are in your hands," sounded the echo from the Armenian's mouth and a wealth of Indian oaths were attached to the English sentence, following it as the tail follows the comet.

Clive signed to the secretary. The latter took the reddish paper, spread it out on the table, pushed the ink-stand forward, dipped the pen in the ink and handed it to Clive. The latter wrote his name on the document.

Mr. Petrus crossed the room like a sleep walker, keeping his eyes fixed on Omichand and he went on holding the signet in his hand for some time before he withdrew his stare, prepared the wax and pressed Mir Jaffar's seal on the document.

A solemn stillness lay over the room. Omichand smiled in front of him; it was an empty, expressionless smile. He looked as though nothing that was happening there had anything whatsoever to do with him.

When Clive addressed him he started as though he had been dreaming. "You see, Omichand, that we have concluded the treaty in spite of the fact that the obligations to which we bind ourselves ruin Mir Jaffar and me."

"I am very pleased that you have signed, gentlemen," replied Omichand, "only the document is not yet valid. Admiral Watson..."

"... will sign!"

"I hope so, Sabu Jang, but I won't acknowledge the document until I have seen the Admiral's signature with my own eyes. He represents the Company as well as the English Government..."

As Clive was about to reply, the door opened. Murad's brown face was visible for a second. That was the signal.

Clive did not consider it necessary to hide the nervousness which came over him at Murad's appearance. Hastily

he observed: "In a few minutes you will see Admiral Watson's signature with your own eyes, Omichand. Until then will you please go into the waiting-room. Walsh, show the gentleman out and wait with him. I don't want Admiral Watson to see you."

And again turning to Omichand who was already standing in the doorway, Clive went on: "As soon as the signature is in my hands I shall call you. Now please go quickly."

Walsh hastened to lead the Gento into the next room. The door had scarcely closed before Clive produced the second treaty. Without wasting a word, Mr. Petrus pressed his seal on the gleaming white paper. Clive hastily added his name. Then he pushed the Armenian into another room.

On the threshold Mr. Petrus again turned round: "Don't forget, sir, that my master also only feels bound by the agreement if the Admiral signs it..."

"Of course, of course."

"You are a Hindu, Sabu Jang," said the Armenian. And there was an equal quantity of suspicion and admiration in the tone of his words.

Again the bells of a Bengal litter were heard, again the bearers scattered silently after setting down the palankeen.

The door flew open and Maskelyne announced the Admiral in a ringing voice. With exaggeratedly swift movements the Lieutenant-Colonel sprang from behind the table as though he had to receive the King. Hurriedly he rushed up to the Admiral overwhelming the astonished Watson with a flow of words – words of greeting, of delight at seeing him again, of respect and admiration. He shook the worthy man's hands, dragged him rather than led him into the room, pushed a chair towards him and with stressed politeness waited for some time before he himself sat down. Then he dismissed Maskelyne with a wave of his hand. The door closed. Clive looked at

Watson in silent suspense. The room was filled with a profound stillness broken by nothing but Watson's panting breath and the buzzing of the insects flitting about both sides of the window-gauze.

Without any introduction Clive began the attack. He spread out the two treaties in front of the Admiral, expressed in a few words the circumstances which had given rise to the extraordinary documents, painted a vivid picture of the perilous position of the little group of Europeans faced by a crazy Nabob and his hoards of men and finally pressed the pen into his hand, pushing the white paper towards him.

But fiery and ingenious as the attack was, it was broken by Watson's superior, blasé calm. —

"Well, war with Surajah after all?" asked the Admiral, "I am very pleased that you are at last convinced of the justice of my point of view, Lieutenant-Colonel Clive. We shall have ethics on our side if we bring the murderer of the Black Hole to account..."

"... the French will also be driven from the field, sir ..."

"The committee must decide about that."

Clive redoubled his exertions. He called Drake a cowardly deserter and refused to bring a matter of such weighty importance before the committee. He coaxed, flattered, praised, begged and implored.

Meanwhile Watson could not bring himself to read the treaty. "I won't even read it," he shouted time and time again, "it wouldn't be correct to ignore the committee!" And his lips screwed themselves up into the famous Watsonian pout.

"Really?" cried Clive. His attitude changed. He threw aside the mask of friendly devotion and respect and the old Clive reappeared, the unruly, downright ... "Really, so this treaty is not correct, it's not ethical and it's beneath your dignity to sign it? Then it is time to indulge in a

little compromise. Well, read through this treaty, Admiral, then you will find that it binds the Marshal, Mir Jaffar in the event of his winning the throne of Bengal, to pay the English fleet a sum of three and a half million pounds out of the treasury of his predecessors ..."

This took the Admiral's breath away – for a moment his mouth straightened out.

"Three ... and ... a half ... million ..." he gasped.

"Just think what an impression that will make in London! When you become First Lord of the Admiralty! Your uncle will be proud of you!"

Clive felt that Watson was wavering. To complete the triumph he proposed: "We will also include a suitable reward for you, Admiral ..." And he seized the pen to add the relative note.

But the Admiral jumped up indignantly. "Do you think I can be bribed, sir?"

"No, no," stammered the astonished Clive.

"I sent the elephant, the state costume and the turban jewel back to the Nabob!"

"I didn't!"

"My hands remain pure ..."

"Let's leave it at the price for the fleet then. A compromise to which Your Excellence cannot refuse his agreement ..." And Clive laid the whitish paper in front of the Admiral.

But Watson recognised clearly that the writing covered a smaller area on this document than on the other. He pushed the treaty away, drew the reddish paper towards him and signed it. Without taking any notice of Clive's tirades which beat ceaselessly down upon him, he got up and strode to the door.

Clive made a supreme effort. He caught up the Admiral on the threshold and stood in his way before he could leave the anteroom.

But Watson cut his words short: "You can do what you like Clive, I won't sign the falsified document! Even if you stand on your head! I'm no rogue, Mr. Clive, not I!"

"You sign a treaty which brings the fleet three and a half million pounds. But when it is a case of performing a sheer necessity on which England's future depends you plaintively refuse," Clive cried after him in a smothered voice as he hurried away.

Furious, he stamped back into his study, slamming the door to with a loud bang. Suddenly he thought of something.

Omuchand was still waiting in the next room. This rogue must not find out what had taken place.

Clive cast a furious glance at the two manuscripts lying peacefully side by side in front of the inkwell. His face became distorted. "This ... Admiral ... this ... cur ..." Silently his lips formed the syllables. A grim smile appeared on his face. He sprang to the writing table, dipped the pen in the ink, bent down, and stared for several seconds at the third and last name at the foot of the red document. He stared greedily as though he wanted to absorb the writing. Then he put his hand to the white paper and wrote: "Charles Watson ..."

The finger nails moved softly over the gong; Murad glided softly across the room.

Maskelyne entered at once. With his head high, Clive stood behind the writing table and pointed to the two papers. His brother-in-law came closer.

"Signed? Watson has signed?" he cried in amazement.

"Here, yes," said Clive and pointed to the reddish paper.

"There too," replied Edmund, nodding.

"Oh, no, my friend, not there!"

His friend looked at Clive enquiringly.

Then Clive drew his head between his shoulders, lowered his left ear, screwed up his eyes, pursed his lips

and said: "Not there! Oh, no! Look at the two signatures carefully, and you will see that they come from two different hands..."

"In heaven's name, Bob, you don't mean to say that you yourself..."

"Yes, that's what I mean to say! I have forged the signature!"

A snatch and the document bearing Watson's signature on reddish coloured paper was torn up. The horrified Edmund rescued the fragments with shaking hands.

With long strides Clive hurried to the door and pulled it open. Drawn up to his full height he stood on the threshold with his arm stretched right out and held the paper under the Gento's eyes. "Do you see the signature, Omichand? There is Watson's name on the paper. The signature is still wet..."

The Gento nodded as a sign that he was satisfied, salaamed and went.

When the friends were alone Clive threw the document on the table. Lightly, as though he were joking, he said: "shake some sand on the signature, Edmund so that it doesn't smudge. It shall be preserved for the future, for Robert Clive has made history with it."

VII.

Clive had entered into a game which the most artful gambler of the century, Joseph François Dupleix, had lost under considerably more favourable conditions and had paid for with the world supremacy of his country and his own life's happiness.

In Jan-Begum, Dupleix had found an incomparable connoisseur of the subject, a supporter of his own will and ability, who was superior in character and intellect, reliable and enthusiastic. The influence of a dozen devoted relations protected him from his High Council and the

authorities at home. Great generals such as La Bourdonnais and Chanda Sahib fought his battles and the thrones of the Deccan and the Carnatic put men and money at his disposal.

Clive remained entirely dependent on himself. His assistants, the former messenger and present interpreter, Bunda Mutal, Edmund Maskelyne, John Walsh, Scrafton and Watts were nothing more than useful tools devoid of any ideas of their own. Their ability and will were dependent on his, their confidence was kindled by his courage; their strength was nourished by their master's strength of mind. He himself was still a poor man possessing the remains of a modest fortune. His body, weakened by the climate and exertion drove him to take refuge in a strong narcotic. His future and that of his affairs depended more or less on the good will of two traitors and more than that, on the extremely doubtful supposition that the villainous accomplices would find the time and opportunity to put their will into action. With a few swift, improvised moves, Clive had produced a political situation of a highly problematical character.

His military and tactical position – as was soon to become clear – was so desperate that only a gambler could hope to hold and defend it. But only a madman could count on a victory.

Nobody knew all this better than Clive. If he had occupied himself with the risks in an almost playful way up till now, if he had chatted to Edmund about Roman proconsuls as though he were a second Lawrence and the guardian of three secrets, now he was silent and still. As he calculated his chances and those of his opponents he found that his own were by far the worst.

The board on which the figures were moving had changed – now that the preparations were at an end – into a battlefield.

The armies advanced.

On the river Bagirati, as the Hugli is called at this point, lay Clive with nine hundred Europeans, a thousand sepoy, and six cannons – his entire force.

Near the town of Plassey, Surajah Dowla had assembled fifty thousand infantrymen, eighteen thousand cavalry and fifty cannons and had formed a fortified camp.

The Chevalier Law had advanced with the French army to within two days march of the Nabob.

Counting Calcutta and Omichand, five players were taking part in the game.

The strongest figure was the king, Surajah Dowla, commander of a gigantic army of well-armed, well-disciplined and experienced soldiers, lord of treasures and financial means of considerable extent. He had secured himself on two sides by treaties – if the English attacked him, he would call the French to his help and vice versa. He could hope to get rid of both opponents so long as they did not unite but there seemed no prospect of this since France and England were at war.

The next best position after the king's was held by a bishop, Omichand, who stood to win whatever happened. If the Nabob was victorious the Gento might hope to recover his property; if the English were victorious, the reward of £ 300,000 would fall due.

In the third best place was Mir Jaffar. His position was not without danger but neither was it hopeless. Danger could only threaten him through Omichand but the latter was held by Clive on the golden chain of the reward. The French were in a scarcely less favourable situation. They had lost Chandernagore, their one stronghold in Bengal, but at the same time the Chevalier Law had a free hand. If he saw a chance he could interfere, but he could also stand by and was in no way compelled to run a risk.

The fourth best place was held by the High Council of Calcutta. It took no serious part in the game. Through

his independent action, Clive had freed them of all risk. If Clive won the game, Calcutta must enjoy an appreciable profit. If he lost, they stood behind the walls of Calcutta, waited and negotiated.

Clive was worst off of all. He was acting without any protection from Calcutta or London. His opponent was superior to him in the ratio of 18,000 to 0 in cavalry, in the ratio of 50 to 3 in infantry and in the ratio of 50 to 5 (in numbers) and 100 to 5 (in calibre) in artillery. This was not counting the French, who could turn the approximately sixty-fold advantage into one of a hundred-fold. In addition to this, the hopelessness of the tactical and strategic position gradually impressed itself upon Clive.

At first the adversaries stood inactively face to face for several days, watching and observing one another.

In the letters which were exchanged nightly between Mir Jaffar and Clive, the Englishman urged the carrying out of the planned treason, while Mir Jaffar announced that the Englishman would have to wait till the attack and that he could only go over to his friend at the last minute when the battle had already begun.

The Nabob distrusted Mir Jaffar, for he suspected that his General Field-Marshal had some evil in mind. Would he lay his hands on the proof and be able to unmask the traitor in time? And the French – would they come to his help? Or did they suspect that he had for months been carrying on negotiations with both European Powers?

Clive spent his days and nights under the weight of terrible suspense. The waters of the Hugli gurgled in front of his tent. On the other side of the Hugli, a few miles distant, was Surajah's camp.

It was June, the month of the rains. At any moment the heavens might open their sluices and turn the river into a sea. In this event an encounter before the end of the

rainy season was out of the question. But Mir Jaffar would not be able to postpone his treachery to Surajah Dowla until then. With that the support on which Clive's entire plan rested would be literally washed away.

But if Clive crossed the Hugli while the river was still traversable and then the rainy season set in, once Clive had reached the other bank the retreat was cut off and the English army separated from Calcutta, its base. Then Clive would be hemmed in between the superior forces of the opponent facing him and the rising water in his rear. In such a position Clive, as he well knew, would be absolutely at the mercy of Mir Jaffar. If the General Field Marshal did not keep his word, or if his treachery were discovered and frustrated in time, then the little band of Englishmen would be overwhelmed by the Indian masses and thrown into the water. Then it might well happen that not a single Englishman would escape with his life, that the roaring water would carry away the remains of the army and obliterate the traces of the defeat for which the English General bore full responsibility. If the Nabob then saw his opportunity, Calcutta, and with it England's future in India, would be lost for the second and last time.

Hourly Clive glanced up at the sky which was growing darker and darker. The sultry ness increased and with it the General's excitement. The pressure of the decision weighed heavily on Clive's soul.

Filled with anxious thoughts Clive left his tent and ran out into the jungle encircling the camp.

As if pursued by Furies he rushed into the thicket, stumbled over roots and hillocks, pushed his way through shrubs and bushes, as though he was fleeing from the enemy. He was driven by the most terrible pursuer, his own thoughts. With what trouble and art he had erected the building of his plans and hopes! In order to attain his end he had not shrunk from the most extreme measures, he had knitted his thoughts and soul into a network of evil

intentions, had sacrificed his peace of mind, planned the blackest treason and had used all his strength to make the trap in which Surajah Dowla, the murderer of the Black Hole, should meet his end. If the plan succeeded, if Mir Jaffar went over to the English and attacked the enemy in the rear or the flank, the Nabob's fate was sealed. Then success would justify the crime employed. For a second it seemed to Clive as though he had only to stretch out his hand to draw the net to him.

Exhausted, he stopped running, threw himself down under an Alamaram fig tree and seized the drug which would help him. Gradually he became calmer. With all the force of his imagination he began to think out what course events would take in one case or the other.

He had plunged himself heavily into guilt. Driven by the greed for power and gold, he had sinned. And he did not regret what he had done, for the reward was high and the emergency inexorable. If the attempt succeeded he would be the ruler of men and countries.

But if he let the opportunity slip by, what then? Then in a few weeks he must, of necessity, make fresh preparations, hatch fresh plots, enter into fresh obligations and entangle himself more deeply in lies, treason and bribery. Then he must continue along the route of crime, he would run astray, would sacrifice his self-respect, pride and peace of mind – this time for ever. Then he would go his way, a second Dupleix, permanently and irrevocably into the land of black magic. Then he would not merely have copied the Frenchman's methods, since they were directed towards the attainment of a single goal and because they lay to a certain extent in the air of India and that of other colonial territory – then he would undertake a change of his whole being. Then Clive would not have imitated Dupleix, driven by necessity on one occasion – then Dupleix would have poured his spirit into Clive as into a receptacle, filling it completely.

And suddenly Clive realised that he would lose more than his self-respect and his peace of mind, namely his freedom! He was still master of his decisions. Clive was still playing for India – but then India would be playing for Clive. Then he would be a slave to the merciless master, who was not content to demand the one single crime but who rather employed the right to possess the souls of its bondsmen entirely and for all time.

No, Clive was not prepared to pay this price, not for all the treasures of India! He would not find the aim of his life in adding one piece of roguery to another. There was a difference between Robert Clive and Joseph François Dupleix.

For the first time in his life, Clive enquired into the inner meaning of his actions. For he felt distinctly that it was not the mere bare desire for money and fame which drove him, even though he himself never denied that he was ambitious and valued the worth of money. But the satisfaction of this desire could not possibly form the ultimate meaning and aim of existence. He still could not find the answer but he had a mysterious feeling that the answer, if he could once give it, would be worthy of him.

The decision about the military and tactical emergency was curiously connected with the nature and development of his own soul. This much was certain: if he refused to cross the river flowing at his feet, his soul would soon be compelled to cross that other stream which the poets say divide heaven and hell in our breasts.

Clive had found illumination. The question was not: 'Victory or defeat' – it was: 'Clive or Dupleix'.

And the answer was: 'A Robert Clive can vanquish or be defeated – but he can never become a Dupleix!'

Clive refused to complete this change which had already begun. That meant that he must join in battle, must cross the river and attack.

And he hurried back into the camp and gave the order to cross the river.

As Clive stepped into the boat which carried him to the opposite bank, the clouds broke. And at the last minute, the English army crossed the river amid thunder and lightning. They reached the other bank and with it the protection of the jungle under whose mighty tree-tops the army assembled to begin the march against Surajah Dowla in the first fine hours.

When the companies were drawn up Clive went from section to section, from man to man, looking each soldier in the eye and as the only exhortation in this hour calling to him: "Keep your powder dry! Keep your powder dry!" And he tested the grenadiers' cartridge cases and powder bags and the artillerymen's powder-barrels and took care that the precious material was properly covered and protected against the penetration of the rain.

Then he marched against Surajah Dowla's camp and did not come to a halt until he heard the noise of the pipes and drums which usually sound during the night watches of Indian camps.

He spent the night one mile away from the Nabob's army. The soldiers slept but not one of the officers closed his eyes. Full of anxiety they watched for the break of day.

Sleep also fled from the Nabob. Surajah Dowla was resting alone in his tent. Suddenly he caught a sound, and jumped up with a scream of horror. Servants rushed up with torches. By the glare of the light the Nabob saw that one of his servants had entered the tent. And he cried out complainingly: "I thought I was dead already."

The 23rd of June of the year 1757 dawned.

Surajah left his camp and arranged his host for battle.

On a rise from which he could observe the enemy camp, Clive stood and watched the vast host advancing

against his little band of Englishmen. And he noticed that the ranks of cavalry drawn up at his feet consisted of Tartars, well-built, warlike and brave men – other warriors than those who formed the armies of the Carnatic.

He saw the cannons, fifty in number, twenty-four and thirty-two pounders, each firmly fixed on its six-foot-high stand and drawn by fifty yokes of those huge, white oxen which are bred in the land of Purnea and behind each cannon trotted an elephant who planted his head against the wooden frame to get the gun over rough ground at the greatest possible speed.

Clive watched a little band of about forty Frenchmen who had formed themselves into a separate troop and were bringing four small cannons with them. The cavalry advanced to right and left of the artillery. Behind them stretched the endless columns of infantry filling the plain from the extreme corner of their camp to the forest of Plassey.

But in the distance fluttered the standards of Mir Jaffar whose army was drawn up in an interminable battle-line.

The Englishmen stood at the order. The Thirty-ninth foot were in the centre. In front of them John Johnstone had set up his six small cannons. To right and left of the nine hundred Europeans, a thousand sepoy formed each of the wings.

At about eight, the first shot was fired from Surajah Dowla's cannons. An English grenadier sank down dead on the ground; a second was wounded.

This shot gave the Nabob's artillery the signal for the opening of the cannonade. But the cannons were pointing too high and the cannon balls fell behind the English lines. The English, on the other hand, aimed accurately and shot after shot fell among the thick masses of the enemy, clearing huge areas among them.

But the Indians held their ground and continued their fire so that in half an hour the English had lost ten Europeans and twenty sepoys.

The unexpected stand moved Clive to retreat with his troops into the forest of Plassey.

The enemy thought they had won and advanced with their guns. The firing increased but the English found ample protection behind the trees and no further losses occurred. Every now and then the English guns silenced a large section of the Indians with well-aimed shots.

And still Mir Jaffar gave no assistance. The cares gathered ever more thickly round the English General. He shouted to his officers and it was decided to continue the cannonade throughout the day, not to begin the attack until the night and to postpone the storming of the enemy camp until then.

When Clive saw that for more than an hour he had nothing to expect apart from the exchange of fire, he lay down to sleep for an hour. Edmund stood beside him ready to waken him in the event of anything extraordinary happening.

Towards midday, heaven came to Clive's assistance. The rain set in again and the enemy, whose powder became wet, gradually ceased firing.

Surajah Dowla sat in his tent rejoicing over the certain victory. His generals appeared one after the other to inform him of the favourable progress of the battle. But then the news reached the Nabob that Mir Murdin, his most faithful general, was fatally wounded. The Nabob was seized by a terrible fright. He sent for Mir Jaffar although he distrusted him at the bottom of his heart. When the Field Marshal entered the tent, Surajah Dowla tore the turban from his head, threw it on the ground and cried: "Here is my turban, Jaffar! And you must defend it!"

The General bowed, laid his hand on his breast and promised to do all he could.

At the same moment, however, another general entered the tent and advised the Nabob to leave his army and return to his capital. Pleased by this advice, Mir Jaffar gave the order to break off the battle and return to the camp.

This happened at two o'clock in the afternoon.

Then Maskelyne woke his brother-in-law. In amazement Clive saw the long lines of white oxen set in march and turning in a wide circle, return to the camp. Soon only the little band of forty Frenchmen were still firing.

Now Clive set himself at the head of a company and stormed the position of the French.

At this moment it so happened that Mir Jaffar turned aside with his troops and advanced towards the forest. Clive, misunderstanding his intentions, sent some companies and cannons against the supposed enemy and had the imaginary attack resisted by artillery fire.

Mir Jaffar's troops surged backwards.

Now Clive perceived the possibility of attaining a final victory. He advanced with his troops to the height from which he had watched the commencement of the battle and set about storming the camp from here.

This attack broke the enemy's resistance.

The Indians scattered in wild flight.

At five o'clock in the afternoon, Clive marched through the middle of the enemy camp past the tents, guns and baggage, driving the enemy before him. Then Major Coote took over the further pursuit. Surajah Dowla tore along ahead of his fleeing army and two thousand cavalymen accompanied him to Murshidabad.

When the battle was over, one of Mir Jaffar's messengers came to Clive with a letter. The man had been looking for the English General for hours and the contents

of the letter were long out of date. In this letter Mir Jaffar's extraordinary movement was explained and the Marshal's behaviour vindicated.

Thus Clive won the battle of Plassey without the support of Mir Jaffar.

This battle survives as a unique event in military history for which, in several respects, there is no parallel. According to the verdict of expert generals, Clive ought never to have risked the battle under the given circumstances and his undertaking is defined as 'absolute madness' by the authorities on the subject. In no single point does Clive's behaviour correspond to the maxims of the 'Old Gentleman'. Clive is really 'a Heaven-born general' as Lord Chatham later expressed it.

We may boldly maintain that history can show no second victory in which such important results were achieved with so little loss. With a handful of white men of whom only twenty were killed or wounded and with a few sepoys of whom only sixteen remained on the field, Clive brought about the downfall of a gigantic Empire.

Clive was the man to make the utmost use of the advantages offered him by this victory. Everything which he had ever desired must fall into his lap now: political power, wealth, glory. He only needed to seize them.

And how he clutched at them!

What still remained to be done seemed like child's play. Surajah Dowla had finally and speedily to be disposed of in such a way that he would find no opportunity of taking anything of value with him. Then Mir Jaffar had to be set on the throne of the three provinces. Naturally the enthronement must take place in such a way

that all India would understand that this Nabob owed his power to England and that England stood behind him, indeed that the actual power lay in English hands. Then he could take the treaty out of his pocket and collect the agreed sum.

Clive did not hesitate to give the necessary orders at once. On the very day of the battle he sent an envoy to Mir Jaffar and invited him to come to him. Then he sent word to Major Coote that he was not to halt until he had reached Murshidabad.

As Mir Jaffar, accompanied by his son, Miran, approached Clive's tent, he was filled with great anxiety at the prospect of the wrath of the general to whom he had brought no assistance in spite of his promise.

As he dismounted from his elephant the sentry stood to attention and presented arms.

Pale and trembling, Mir Jaffar collapsed. He took the presenting of arms for an attempt on his life. At the same moment, however, Clive came up to him, put his arm round him and greeted him as Nabob of Bengal, Bahir and Orissa.

Far from reproaching the Marshal, Clive waved aside his excuses and advised the Nabob finally to expel the defeated rival.

"Hurry to Murshidabad, my dear Nabob, and prevent Surajah Dowla from taking his treasures with him. You know what obligations you are under according to the treaty! My Company, the English fleet and the army expect the stipulated reward."

And events proved how right Clive was to urge Mir Jaffar to speed.

For Surajah Dowla had his wives loaded on fifty elephants together with a great deal of jewellery and gold

rupees. He himself took to flight dressed as an ordinary Indian, and left his royal palace by night, climbing out of the window accompanied by his favourite wife and a eunuch, with a casket of valuable jewels in his hand. He intended to seek out the Chevalier Law and to put himself under the protection of the French.

He arrived safely at a place where he found shelter in a little cottage in a neglected garden. But here he was discovered by a pariah whose ears he had once had cut off. The pariah betrayed the ex-Nabob who was brought back to Murshidabad. In the very palace in which he had ruled a few days previously he was led before Mir Jaffar. Shaking all over he threw himself at the Nabob's feet weeping and begging for his life.

Mir Jaffar was undecided as to what he ought to do but Miran, the Nabob's seventeen-year-old son, insisted on Surajah Dowla's immediate death.

The ex-Nabob was put in prison. When the executioner appeared he begged with loud laments to be allowed to say his prayers and wash himself as prescribed. Then the hangman seized a pitcher of water standing in the prison and with the words: "This is the prescribed washing!" he emptied the vessel over Surajah Dowla's head. Then as he went on: "and this is the prescribed prayer," he stabbed him and hacked him to pieces.

The portions of the body were hung on an elephant and taken to Anwar ed Din's grave. Here, Surajah Dowla was buried beside his grandfather, having met his death in as violent a way as his ancestors in the twentieth year of his life and the fifteenth month of his rule.

But in his chancellery, copies were found of the letters he had exchanged with the French. Had Law set out as the Nabob implored him in his last letter and marched twenty miles further "the course of world history would perhaps have run differently and in all probability - as

the English historian expresses it – quite different events would have taken place” than those one can read about here.

To give the people of Bengal a proof of their unity, Clive and Mir Jaffar rode into the capital together on elephants. Clive realised with astonishment that Murshidabad far surpassed the English capital both in the abundance and splendour of the palaces and in the number of the inhabitants.

Behind the elephants bearing the generals marched two companies of the Thirty-ninth and a hundred sepoy.

And so large was the Nabob's palace that all these soldiers found quarters in it without a single one of the thousand servants having to make room for them.

The nobles of the realm assembled in the durbar for the coronation ceremony. Accompanied by Watts and Walsh, Clive took up his position with them to pay homage to the new Nabob.

With hesitating steps, Mir Jaffar entered the audience chamber. There he stood, uncertain what he ought to do and staring at Clive with his huge, protruding eyes, and the feeling came over Clive that he had caught the glance of a dog.

Clive stepped up to the Nabob, seized him by the hand and led him to the throne which Surajah Dowla had hitherto occupied. When the two men reached the throne, Mir Jaffar tried nervously to push Clive on it. But Clive seized the Nabob, forced him down on the seat and was the first to render him homage. Then he made a speech the gist of which has been preserved for us, since he included it in a letter to London. It ran as follows: –

“It is not the maxim of the English to war against the government, but Surajah Dowla not only would not fulfil the treaty he had entered into with us, but was taking measures by calling in the French to destroy us; but it has

pleased God to overthrow him, and as the present Nabob is a brave and good man, the country may expect to be quiet and happy under him; for our part we shall not always interfere in the affairs of Government, but shall leave that wholly to the Nabob; as long as his affairs require it we are ready to keep the field, after which we shall return to Calcutta and attend solely to commerce, which is our proper sphere and our whole aim in these parts."

Bunda Mutal translated the speech into the languages of the country.

Then the princes of Bengal paid homage to their Nabob.

Clive's great speculation had succeeded, the game was won. As general, politician and empire-builder he stood at the height of his success.

The great day dawned for visiting the treasure chamber and collecting the agreed amounts.

In front of the heavy iron door Clive found Omichand, who had been sitting here on a stone for days, eagerly awaiting the moment in which he would receive his three hundred thousand pounds.

When the Gento recognised Clive he stood up and a beam spread over his face. He bowed and ran hurriedly up to join the gentlemen. But it was intimated to him that he must remain behind. Then he burst out in loud lamentations and entreated time and time again to be allowed to join them. But the door was locked in his face and he returned sadly to his place and sat down on his stone.

How amazed was Clive when he entered the vault! The walls were hidden by shelves from floor to ceiling and on each of the shelves gold bars lay side by side and long sticks of gold and silver coins all wrapped up in muslin, fastened together with string and provided with little olles

leaves on which the number and value of the pieces was indicated. In front of the shelves were vessels made of minted gold and on high stands supporting bowls lay bags, each of which contained precious stones of various kinds and sizes. There was also a tremendous amount of gold and silver ware, dishes, plates and candlesticks. Diamond-studded swords and daggers hung on the walls and in a separate cabinet the crown jewels and the largest gems, which served as turban ornaments, were set aside. Costly trappings for palankeens, elephants, camels and horses, one and all adorned with pearls and jewels, filled a whole room.

Hours passed before Clive had viewed the masses of treasure and had satisfied his curiosity as to the purpose of this particular utensil or that peculiar ornament or as to the value of one or other of the large diamonds.

At last the moment seemed to have come to pull the treaty out of his pocket and to enter into the settlement of accounts.

But now it was the treasurer, Reudulub, who was seized with astonishment.

"All the treasures of the Nabob assembled here would not suffice to cover the demands!" he cried, glancing at the colossal sums. "If you bear in mind, gentlemen, that the nobles of the country will lay claims before the Nabob and if you further take into consideration that the administration of the three provinces requires considerable sums, for the army must be maintained, to say nothing of the Nabob's court suite – then you will realise that the payment of the combined millions cannot possibly take place on the spot."

Clive saw that he had been foolish to undertake the collection of the sums due, on the spot and without any consideration. He left the vault with the treasurer to enter the Nabob's study. When Omichand caught sight of the two men he jumped up, joined them and ran along behind them through the anterooms and the durbar to Mir Jaffar's apartments.

Again he was refused admittance and again he sat down lamenting before the door and announced in tears that he wanted to wait until he was called.

Then Clive and Mir Jaffar, Watts and Reudulub, Prince Miran and Scrafton held a council. After long calculations it was decided to undertake the payment in instalments. Half the agreed sum was to be handed over at once, two thirds in gold and silver and one third in jewels and effects whose value was to be determined by a joint court of arbitration. The second half Mir Jaffar undertook to settle in three instalments within three years.

When all the arrangements had been made and confirmed in writing Mir Jaffar brought forward Omichand's claims.

"Three hundred thousand pounds form a debt," he announced "which I cannot cope with at the moment."

"We'll speak to the Gento," answered Clive. "The time has come to tell him the plain truth." And turning to Scrafton, Clive went on: "Take the agreement, go to the door and tell Omichand that there is no more money available for the satisfaction of his claims."

Scrafton did as he was ordered. In his conversation with the Gento he 'thundered at' the latter – as the historian expresses it – and explained to him: "You can't have any money, Omichand."

"My claim is part of the state treaty," replied the merchant and his gloomy expression changed to an aggressive one, "I shall go to law and accuse the Nabob and Sabu Jang."

"Really?" said Scrafton pretending to be very surprised and looking at the treaty as though he were reading it. "I can't find anything in it . . ." And he handed the Gento the paper which glistened white as snow in the light of the afternoon sun.

Omichand stared at the document in horror. Then

he collapsed unconscious and as though struck by lightning. Scrafton had him put into a palankeen and taken home.

He lay there for many hours without recovering consciousness. Then he got up and ran to Clive to bemoan his grief. Clive answered him: "Only one thing can help you, Omichand – go on a pilgrimage to some sacred pagoda!"

And poor Omichand took off his lovely clothes, clad himself in a pilgrim's rags and walked to the pagoda Mulda to implore help from the god Vishnu.

But not even this cheerful god was able to mend Omichand's broken heart. When the Gento took leave of the pagoda he left behind the best thing he possessed – his keen intelligence.

Back in Murshidabad he put on his richest clothes, adorned himself with his most valuable jewels and went through the streets of the town followed by a crowd of servants, restless, without reason or purpose. A year later he gave up the ghost.

The splendid news reached Calcutta that the town was beginning to prosper. Seven million rupees, packed in seven hundred cases and loaded on a hundred ships, arrived in the harbour. The fleet had hoisted all the flags and pennants and the treasure was welcomed with music. Soon a second transport arrived, comprising one and a half million rupees and finally a third bringing gold and jewels to the same value, so that the English received exactly ten millions in payment. These formed half the agreed total sum. The same amount would be paid later in three instalments at the appointed times.

A committee was formed to undertake the distribution of the money. Trade revived afresh and there was prosperity in every house.

The money did not make people forget the other advantages brought by the treaty. A mint was established and already on the 19th of August the first rupees left the workshop.

Clive set about reconstructing the town from the very bottom. The old forts were demolished and rebuilt in fresh, more favourable positions; the whole town was turned into an impregnable fortress.

All the happiness which had been hoped for since the news of the battle of Plassey had been fulfilled.

Only one person was very distressed. He had refused to accept gifts and people were careful not to press him. Admiral Watson became quite ill, he was seized with a malicious fever. On the fifth day of the illness he passed away. He had upheld dignity, behaved correctly and had not broken the rules of ethics, but the compromise which he offered to death was not accepted. His last words were: "This Clive is a genius after all!"

Clive had received £ 234,000 of the tremendous booty as the share which came to him as the general and victor. In view of the circumstances Clive's profit cannot be considered too high, even though five million livres form a really considerable sum. Clive lived in a fine house, wore rich clothes and walked through the streets accompanied by crowds of servants, presenting the appearance of a greater man than had ever been seen before. Now he could bring his Margaret to him. He had promised Edmund that he would lay all treasures at the feet of his sister and make her the wealthiest of women. This promise was redeemed.

As Margaret left the ship from Madras and stepped onto the quay of Calcutta, she was faced by an elegant, dignified man of barely thirty-three whose bearing and expression told of pride, self-confidence and the consciousness of his achievements as well as of his importance. But

Margaret had remained the same. She was sufficiently woman and companion to feel proud of her Bob and to be pleased by his fame and wealth. She willingly accepted the difficult lot of being the wife of a great man and sacrificing all that she understood by happiness and joy, the self-sufficing, calm content and the undisturbed union of hearts to the meaning and aim of life which he had set for himself. The life happiness of which she had dreamed had not been granted to her and all the honours and possessions provided a poor compensation for the constant separation and the nights spent in tears for the life and health of her husband. Since she was too proud and wise ever to complain she accepted the sincere love, faithfulness and dependence of her Bob who tried to make up for what he had to take from her with careful tenderness.

Since Pigot's cries for help could not be silenced Clive set about freeing the Carnatic after he had rendered Calcutta impregnable. He could divest Bengal of troops with an easy conscience.

The French General, Lally, had taken St. David and was now setting about capturing Madras. The Black Town had already fallen. Heroically Pigot was defending the ruins of St. George.

Nevertheless Clive did not direct his operations against Madras. He had discovered that the adversary had a weaker spot.

Clive realised that the northern provinces of the Coromandel coast formed the key position to the possession of India. If a wedge could be inserted at this point between the Carnatic and Bengal then the important northern provinces would be covered and Madras threatened at the same time.

So he sent Major Forde into the region which Bussy had once conquered for Dupleix.

The expected result followed. The Nizam of the Deccan, Salabat Jang, realised that it would be more

advantageous to leave his old French allies and go over to the English. Salabat Jang formed a peace and made a joint attack on the Marquis de Bussy and Count Lally. After a few months Madras was released.

While his subordinates were successful in the Carnatic, Clive by no means remained idle. He saw himself compelled to add two new victories to his famous deeds. The first of these was destined to have great results for himself, the second for England.

Having got into difficulties with his sub-nabobs, Mir Jaffar summoned Clive to his assistance. Clive appeared with four hundred men, of whom the greater number were sepoys, rescued the Nabob from his perilous position and restored him to absolute power over the throne of Bengal.

When the victory had been won the Nabob was extremely delighted. Clive, the most powerful man in India, had proved himself a faithful and reliable friend. After this fortunate discovery Mir Jaffar might proudly regard himself as the best protected Nabob in India.

"To show you my gratitude, Sabu Jang," said Mir Jaffar, directing his doggy look towards Clive, "I offer you the largest gift that I am in a position to give. In accordance with the agreements the East India Company pays me an annual rent of £ 27,000 for the stretches of land south of Calcutta. Prosperous sections of country are involved which include many hundreds of villages and towns and will always retain their value. — We Indians call presents which are handed over in the form of the income from land rent, 'jaghir'. Accept this jaghir, great Sahib. It belongs to you for life ..."

Clive considered. An annual income of £ 27,000 certainly formed a present which was none too common even in the India of the happiest and richest times.

"I think this jaghir," went on the Nabob, "suits your position ..."

The worthy man thought that Clive's hesitation indicated dissatisfaction. Clive, who noticed that, hastened to reply: "Thank you Mir Jaffar. But please do not ever forget that I have not asked you for this jaghir. It was you yourself who offered me the gift. Since I had raised you to your throne I had to defend your throne, I only did my duty and expect no thanks but ..."

Vividly, Clive called to mind the moment when Edmund had returned from Madras and had brought the news from the High Council, the highest English authority in India, that Lieutenant-Colonel Clive would certainly have plenty of opportunity of obtaining money without the co-operation and help of the Company ... How had the councillors expressed themselves? ... With the express observation ... wasn't that it? Well, the moment for obtaining money seemed to have come. Wealth came to Clive ... without the Company's help ... he only needed to stretch out his hand. Having made up his mind he said: "I accept the present and thank you, Mir Jaffar!"

"May Allah grant that you may enjoy this jaghir for many years, Sabu Jang!"

Titles and honours went with the present. Without Clive having entered into any connexion with the court of Delhi and without him ever having asked for it he was sent a document granting him the title of Munsub, Zubit el Mulk, Nasir ud Daula and giving him the right to carry the standard with the sign of the fish. Such things came to him.

Mir Jaffar was indebted to Clive for the acquisition and maintenance of this throne and he certainly clung to his protector with canine devotion. Nevertheless it happened years later that he found the bonds imposed upon him by the English power painful and sought to slip away from them. One of his nobles whispered in his ear that he might

make concessions to the Dutch and encourage them to appear in Bengal with ships and troops. It was clear that the original idea had sprung from a French brain. If the Dutch sea power, the greatest after the English and just at that time considerably superior to the English in India, appeared with warlike intent then France might once more hope to re-establish her position in India.

Seven men-of-war coming from Batavia, ran into the mouth of the Hugli and unloaded powerful land forces.

In all speed Clive mobilised as many troops as he could possibly raise. Practically the whole English army was assembled in the Carnatic. Only a few regulars and some companies of sepoys which Clive had formed and drilled himself were at his disposal.

In a short, bloody and decisive battle, Clive defeated the Dutch. Twenty-three Dutch soldiers were slain; five hundred were taken prisoner by Clive. His closest assistant in defeating the Dutch was none other than the young Warren Hastings.

Now the Dutch fleet had still to be destroyed. Only a Clive could dare to advance with three small, badly-armed cruisers against seven large Dutch battle-ships. Through skilful manoeuvring he succeeded in destroying three of the large Dutchmen with artillery fire one after another and in driving the remaining four to flight.

Thus General Clive had now become Admiral Clive as well.

Since they were left in the lurch by the French after this defeat, the Dutch had to accept the peace dictated to them by Clive. They, who had been in India far longer than the English bound themselves never to appear again on the Indian mainland and not to establish themselves anywhere except on their islands.

At this time the wish first arose in Clive to exercise a far-reaching influence on the destiny of the East India

Company. He sent instructions to the London Stock Exchange to buy shares in his name. He thus placed himself in a position to cast a certain number of votes into the voting-box at the general meeting. He used his influence to remove some of the directors whom he regarded as harmful and to hand over the management of the Company to a man named Sullivan, whom he considered suitable.

Clive might regard it as certain that he had secured England's position in India in such a way that his further presence could be spared. Indeed, he was convinced that the time had now come to fight for India in London. It is true that no tangible cause for anxiety or suspicion had yet been given or a definite evil become apparent, nor had Clive as yet formed a plan as to what shape the future of India was to take. Once again he was driven by nothing but the dark premonition which had so often guided him aright.

Since his health was further badly shaken he decided for this reason also to flee the murderous climate of India and to return home to England.

The arrangements for the journey had already been made when, a few hours before the departure, the news arrived that the French resistance had also been finally broken in the Carnatic, that Pondicherry had been captured, the Marquis de Bussy taken prisoner and Count Lally wounded.

In the full consciousness of having completed his work, Clive could return home to reap the fruits of his success.

Leaving Vansittard as Governor of Calcutta he embarked at the beginning of 1760 with Margaret, Edmund and a number of Indian servants and after a voyage of four and a half months arrived in London.

When the ship had already left Calcutta, another friend arrived an hour too late to take leave of Clive. Sadly, Mir Jaffar gazed down the Hugli where, in the distance the East Indiaman was plunging into the morning mist. The Nabob was fully aware of the fact that he had lost his best

friend and strongest support. The 'small, insignificant' betrayal to the Dutch had been generously forgiven by Clive.

If Clive had entered London for the first time as the victor of Arcot, this time he appears as the conqueror of India, as the final vanquisher of the French and Dutch in India, as an equally great general and far-seeing politician. His cleverness has brought the British Empire a region exceeding France or Spain in size. He has fought fantastic battles and increased the fame of British arms beyond all measure.

He comes to London prepared to return to his old happiness.

The heavy losses which the British suffered a few years before in nearly all the theatres of war have been wiped out. The French have been finally expelled from North America. At Quebec, General Wolfe has finally defeated the French General, Montcalm. The two hostile Generals perished on the spot. The French Mediterranean fleet has been annihilated at Lagos and the French Atlantic fleet at Quiberon. Their ally, Frederick, has pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for them on the Continent. Since France has announced her readiness to conclude peace – for the Dubarry is gaining more and more ground and she is opposed to all colonial and expansive adventures – England can claim a complete victory.

England's world supremacy has become a fact.

This England which has blossomed so wonderfully, this British Empire which has just come into being has, after the death of Wolfe, no such victorious general as Clive. For the English victory at Minden and Warburg was fought under a foreign leader. Thus all the glory is piled on Clive's head. He is received like a king.

And he lives like a king, acquires a palace in Berkeley Square and fits it up more splendidly than any 'nabob' has

ever furnished a house before. The press spreads fantastic rumours about his riches which have grown to a million pounds in the meantime, not counting the annual income of £ 27,000, an absolutely unheard of fortune in those days. Clive is called 'His Majesty's richest subject'.

He has invested huge sums in jewellery, a usual way of conveying property for a long distance in those days. In Madras his purchases of diamonds alone amounted to £ 25,000. And according to Macaulay it is a recognised fact that no Englishman who began with nothing has ever accumulated a fortune of this size at the age of thirty-four.

Clive makes admirable use of his wealth. Already when he was paid his share of the spoil of Plassey, on the very day on which he received his money, he sent £ 100,000 to his sisters and another £ 20,000 to his poor friends and relations. £ 500 he invested as a life-annuity for Stringer Lawrence who was in necessitous circumstances.

If it has so far been the fashion to call the colonial profiteers 'nabobs' as a term of abuse, the term 'Clive' is now used collectively for exceedingly rich people and one says: "Mr. So-and-so has inherited a fortune – he has become a little Clive."

There is still no hint of malice or envy in the tone of Londoners as they utter the name of Clive. The conqueror of India is still in favour; indeed, he is downright popular. When a young nobleman craves the King's permission to enter the army of the King of Prussia, the caustic George answers: "Well, what can you learn there! If you want to learn the art of war you must go to Clive!" The malicious King has no idea that Clive is a General who has never had a text-book on tactics or strategy in his hand – a case which remains unique in the history of the world, for, after all, Napoleon, that genius at improvisation, had at least been to the military school.

But all the honours and all the wealth cannot restore his lost health to the poor 'Nabob Clive'. He has barely

arrived in London, which has just let the first flood of congratulations and flattery flow over him, when he is attacked more fiercely than ever by his old sufferings. In his need he again flees to the little brown pills of which he has an unlimited quantity at his disposal, for he has monopolised the Indian opium trade, the most important in the world at that time, and made it into one of the East India Company's most profitable articles of trade. But here in London, where the counterpoise of uninterrupted, vigorous exercise is lacking, there set in those consequences against which the old servant, Kallinga, had given such a serious warning on the way back from Arcor.

Madness stretches out its hands towards Clive and at times it happens that he gives way to his hallucinations and falls into a completely benighted state.

Since his illness breaks out immediately after his arrival in London and completely prevents him from looking after his interests, he misses a number of honours which would probably have come to him otherwise. And since he is living at this time entirely for the present and feels himself a successful man with a claim to honours and signs of honour, he is hurt by the slight. Not that he suffers severely or bears any grudge – but the things to which he has a claim are withheld from him and that annoys him and makes him angry. He has counted on being made an English Lord instead of which the King only names him an Irish Lord thus excluding him from the admittance to the House of Lords which Clive greatly cherished. "I know I could have bought the title," he says, "but I scorn to obtain for money that which I believe I have earned." Nor does he receive the Order of the Garter on which he has counted.

According to the ideas of the time a title of nobility must be bound with the possession of land. The developments of centuries have brought this about. However great the fortune of a capitalist may be, he enjoys no particular

consideration. A man of the world has a castle, and an estate on which to build. Clive also considers it necessary to acquire landed property. He buys the Irish feudal manor of Balleykilty, changes its name to Plassey and is thus able to call himself Baron of Plassey.

But the great happiness soon melts away.

With the difficulties in which England is involved, a period of dissatisfaction also sets in for the Baron of Plassey.

Pitt is turned out of office. Lord Bute, who is accused of scandalous relations with the Queen Mother, enjoys the confidence of King George and the general unpopularity of the people. The tension which has seized high and low, is expressed in invective cries against the new King. A flood of foul gossip and irresponsible intrigues flows over the kingdom and its capital.

The struggle which now broke out was to develop into a duel between the great Clive and the little Sullivan who had, after all, been raised to his place by Clive.

The signal for the commencement of the battle was given by a natural phenomenon. From the dark thunder clouds which gathered over Murshidabad, a bright streak of lightning flashed out and struck the young Prince Miran, Mir Jaffar's son. Robbed of his natural heir, the Nabob became the victim of greed. Mir Cassim, Mir Jaffar's son-in-law decided that the time had come to take the throne. It was a short step to bring about the change of rulers with the same assistants and by the same means that his predecessors had brought it about.

Mir Cassim went to Calcutta and paid a visit to Mr. Vansittard, the new Governor. "Could not Mir Jaffar be removed from his throne by a far more reliable means than a streak of lightning?"

The small, young, sharp-witted Vansittard understood. He did not doubt for one moment that the time had now

come for him to become a great man. The matter seemed perfectly simple. If Clive had acquired a tremendous fortune by the deposing of the former Nabob and the instalment of the new one – 'by gambling' as Vansittard put it – then the present Governor only needed to imitate his predecessor if he wanted to attain the same wealth.

That which was founded in the ancient tradition of India, developed by Dupleix to the fine art of cunning with extreme craft, that which Clive had raised to the sphere of statesmanship with the improvisation of a genius, then defended with superb courage and brought to an end of extraordinary political importance with extreme skill, that was copied by Mr. Vansittard with nothing but his greed of gain, stupid in that he availed himself of the tricks as they had been shown to him without the Dupleixian delight in the risk or the Clivian grandeur of conception. The moneymaking drama which had had such a tragic ending for Dupleix and had only formed a sub-plot in Clive's play now became the main subject of a bloody farce.

The shrewd and crafty Vansittard, formed an agreement with Mir Cassim assuring him and some of the members of his Council the trifling sum of £200,000 in the event of Mir Jaffar's dethronement and the establishment of Mir Cassim proving successful.

No sooner said than done.

Mr. Vansittard set the entire English army on foot and went to Murshidabad, deposed Mir Jaffar, raised Mir Cassim to the throne and returned home to Calcutta taking the dethroned Nabob and the stolen millions with him. He himself pocketed £60,000 of easily earned profit and the remaining £140,000 were divided among some of the members of the Council.

Evil came to Calcutta with this money. At one blow the employees of the Company became blind and deaf to all duties and rights and from now on were

devoted to the speedy acquisition of wealth. Fraud and blackmail were practised by individuals and groups on every possible object. A regular race for wealth began. Wagers were laid as to who would require the shortest time to be able to retire into private life as a 'nabob'.

Life in the settlement took on a form such as it has never attained at any time or in any country in the world. The luxury which Messrs. Lafarelle and Miron, Hornby or Benfield had enjoyed twenty years before seemed like an absolutely Spartan mode of living in comparison with that indulged in by the minor clerks of Calcutta. The palankeen and punkah mania reached undreamed-of heights.

The huge sums which this life absorbed were obtained from sources which had hitherto flowed to the use of the Company. All the monopolies of the Company were broken, the entire customs and excise system of the Nabob was perforated. For a consideration the employees of the Company would certify for anyone that he was carrying English goods and came under the Company's exemption from duty. Needless to say this money flowed into the private pockets of the clerks. At any rate there seemed to be nothing but English goods in India from now on.

Mir Cassim, convinced of what was going on, raised complaints against the doings of the English traders in which he pleaded that he could not possibly pay high bribes on the one hand while he was being cheated of his rent, customs duties and taxes on the other.

But no help was given. Nobody took any notice of Mir Cassim's complaints.

Thus the Nabob saw himself compelled to prepare for war since his ruin seemed inevitable. He had, in fact, no other alternative.

He increased the army which he had inherited from Mir Jaffar and introduced European dress and discipline. As commander he appointed a man who called himself 'Somru' but whose real name was Walter Reinhard.

The origin of this adventurer has never been fully explained. The authorities define him now as a Swiss, now as an Alsatian and now as a Rhinelander. He had a love affair with an Indian who was a familiar figure and subject of gossip in all harems under the name of 'Somru Begum'. For the time being he was dragging this woman with him on all his campaigns. He was a determined fellow who shrank from no murder and, as will be seen, from no massacre.

When Mir Cassim had finished his preparations he abruptly abolished the Company's exemption from duty. With this war was declared.

Mr. Vansittard responded to the declaration of war by setting a new Nabob in the place of Mir Cassim. Apparently he thought that he had thus made a considerable contribution to the safeguarding of British interests. And who should he think of as a pretendant to the crown but poor old Mir Jaffar who was living in Calcutta more as a prisoner than as a deposed monarch. Mr. Vansittard and his accomplices received the trifling sum of £530,000 for their pains.

Mir Jaffar actually reached his residence in Murshidabad, for Mir Cassim had set out at the head of his troops to surprise the English settlement of Patna.

While Mr. Vansittard was setting the old Nabob, who resigned himself to his fate, on the throne, Mir Cassim besieged the stronghold of Patna with his Commander, Somru. The Councillor Ellis who defended himself bravely was overpowered, and one hundred and fifty Englishmen were taken prisoner by Mir Cassim.

Contrary to expectation, this event, incidental in itself, was to prove of no little importance a few months later.

When Clive's supporters informed him of the general dissolution with which his work was faced he was seized

by a tremendous irritation. The slight improvement in his state of health which had already begun, was followed by a serious reaction.

The whole phantasmagoria of his dreams, conjured up and borne along by the brown potion, fitted in with the ideas aroused in him by the news from Calcutta. His heart was filled with an Apocalypse. He saw himself bound with golden chains and fastened to the Indian slaves in the mines as he had come across them in his marches into the interior of the country ... he felt himself struck by the whips of merciless overseers ... when he raised his face twisted with pain and looked at his neighbour to right or left the Hindu turned into the Marquis Dupleix before his eyes ... Then Clive tore at his chains hurled himself on the Marquis and strangled him until the face of the choking man became red ... then the victim's cheeks swelled out, the lips screwed themselves up, the face adopted the expression of a pig smacking its lips ... and suddenly Clive was staring into the face of Mr. Hornby ...

The setting of the dream scenes changed. The shadows deepened. Clive experienced terrible realities. He was seized with the consciousness that everything was lost. He tried to cry out. His voice failed him, his movements were frozen, his soul faded away ...

When the dreadful horror died down and serene memories returned to him, when everything left him – the torment of the pictures as well as the longing for relief, when the excitement had calmed down and what was disconnected had reassembled, when logic had taken the reins of its chariot of thought in hand and guided it back to the level road, when his spirit was raised, full of strength, from the depths – then he felt after each of the fits as though a portion of his mortality had fallen from him, as though the General, the politician, the speculator, the gambler and the Nabob were melting away and dissolving into night, as though preparations were being made

for a new Clive. Then it seemed incomprehensible to him that he should have calculated and striven, that he should have longed for trade and riches and have brought about victories with all the fibres of his passionate heart, that he should have striven for power, that he should ever have wasted a thought on such mockeries as titles and orders.

At such moments his thoughts drew close to Margaret, his wife, and he realised that the unerring instinct of this woman had grasped much more clearly wherein lay the meaning of life. In the days of his necessity as a clerk, he, too, had dreamed of a happiness which might remain contented and modest. In the days before and after his first great success, the taking of Arcot, when he had just been united with Margaret and had attained the zenith of his inner happiness . . . in those days when he called himself a small purveyor then he had been shaken out of his peace and he had missed the opportunity of seizing the happiness which stood close in front of him. Now, when he stood at the height of extreme success he realised sadly what he had renounced for ever.

Now he had to find the justification for all errors and sins. The moment had come to perfect the last change. When the dreadful storms had died down, Clive asked himself the great question of his life. Now at last he found the answer to it. It was: "England, my country."

His country as a whole should have the usufruct of his achievements, England's happiness should vindicate his actions. And moreover the end and all the means employed towards this end must be in absolute agreement with the eternal and unchangeable moral laws.

At this moment the man Clive raised itself to its full greatness. The spots which tarnished his portrait began to fade.

Clive looked around him for someone who would help him to elucidate his visions. Feelings and ideas were simmering and boiling inside him and the inner tension

threatened to burst his chest as boiling lava tears through the covering of ashes on a mountain. Soon the rain of fire would be released to shatter British India with an eruption and to purify or destroy the spoilt race in its glow.

Clive turned his attention to William Pitt, Frederick's former ally who had been sacrificed to Bute. He assailed the great statesman with his suggestions.

It must be possible to bring the Indian continent into the possession of the English State. Only a few years had gone by since Lieutenant-Colonel Clive had conquered the country. Lord Clive admitted that the commercial and military spirit of the East India Company had made the conquest of the land possible. But the commercial, moral and human strength of the employees of a joint-stock company could never suffice to solve all the thousands of problems which were necessarily involved in an increasing number in the progressive colonisation of the country.

"The state must step into the place of the nabobs," announced Clive to this man whom he trusted above all others. "The English government alone must have the right to appoint the nabobs. Then the nabobs will become vassals of England, paid employees, and the income of the provinces will flow into the chests of the Kingdom of Great Britain. Until that is possible the entire Indian authority, that is to say the East India Company with all its organs, must be under state control. Consider, sir, whether an annual income of more than two million pounds and the products of the richest provinces do not provide a subject worthy of public attention. The nation must take measures to secure such an acquisition for itself! Under the guidance of a capable minister, India would develop into a source of immense wealth. It must pass into the possession of the country at the right time. India will never be a hindrance to England. In view of the indolent nature of its inhabitants, a comparatively small military force will always suffice to maintain peace, order and

security. Also we are in the position to raise a troop of Indian soldiers of indefinite size which will stand by us for they know very well that they will be better paid and better treated by us than by their present rulers. The native citizens of the country know very well that neither their life nor their property is safe under the nabobs. They would welcome the pleasant change from a tyrannical rule to a mild one with joy . . .”

But the time had not yet come to put these ideas into practice. Indeed it was to be another hundred years before England bethought herself of her duty and her advantage. It was not until the fifties of the nineteenth century that India became English. The man who had given premature birth to these thoughts had long since rotted away. More than three generations had to go to the grave before the name of Clive was cleared in the eyes of the grandsons of the stains with which it had been besmeared by foolish and narrow-minded contemporaries and sons.

The year 1763 came, and the Peace of Paris which concluded the Seven Years War introduced the reorganisation of the world.

To Clive's horror it emerged that the foolish, shameless and corrupt Bute had returned the fortresses of Pondicherry and Chandernagore to the French in the peace treaty.

Lord Clive raged, stormed and beat about him. “The state refuses to accept responsibility for the development of the settlements,” he thundered, “but it is prepared to barter away the conquests of brave Company soldiers!”

But Clive not only found that he was alone with his schemes, he found himself in addition exposed to the most unheard of attacks. And it was none other than the general board of the East India Company who held it for needful and right to oppose with harsh words and deeds the man who had conquered India. Lord Clive had hurt

the most sacred, that is to say the dividend, feelings of the shareholders and directors, he had wanted to take away the fat sinecures which they enjoyed and to divert the proceeds of the Indian commerce, which were still immense, into the coffers of the state. That called for revenge.

Sullivan, who could rely upon Bute, opened the hostilities by ejecting in the most rigorous way all the employees whom he knew had Clive's confidence. It was immaterial whether they were councillors, merchants, clerks, officials or officers, anyone who was suspected of being wanted by Clive had to leave India on the spot and return to England.

When Clive became aware of the manner in which he was being treated, he immediately went over to counter-attack. Just in the year 1763 the period of office of the president and the members of the general council expired. Clive made use of this opportunity. He gave instructions for further shares to be bought for him. He wanted to fight the battle for the freeing of India from its blood-suckers on the field of the general meeting.

According to the statutes of the East India Company every investment of £500 was accompanied by a vote. The directors were chosen from the shareholders who had invested £2000 and over and the Director General and the councillors were elected from the directors, twenty-four in number.

Clive obtained possession of shares to the value of £100,000 and thus had two hundred votes at his disposal. He believed he could face the general meeting calmly.

He had instructed his voters to take care above all to see that Sullivan was removed. The extraordinarily high number of votes seemed to ensure the result in accordance with his wish.

But to his astonishment Edmund Maskelyne brought him the news that he had been defeated. Sullivan must have got wind of Clive's purchase of shares and have mobilised

the City, for his supporters had a far greater number of votes at their disposal than Clive's agents. The capitalists and profiteers had won a victory over the statesman and general.

Sullivan now saw himself in a position to strike a terrible blow at Clive – as he thought. – He prohibited him the jaghir.

If Clive had thought that he was saved from the necessity of having to deal with the rabble he was disappointed. Again he had the baboons in front of him, life size; they threw cudgels between his legs and sought to destroy him with pin-pricks. Against his will, they compelled him, who had long entertained sweeping projects, to devote his energy to the securing and defending of his purely personal interests. Well, he would treat them to the boxes on the ear which they so urgently needed for their own good.

First of all he obtained counsel's opinion. The most eminent barristers in the country assured him that the validity of his claim was in no way inferior to that of the East India Company on any of the Indian princes. At that Clive began a law suit. But at the very moment when he saw himself compelled to defend his income, his old sickness set in afresh. He was thrown on his sickbed and robbed of the opportunity of opposing the attacks of the board of directors. Once more Sullivan triumphed.

But soon the whole position was to be fundamentally altered. While Clive was seeking recovery in Bath and finding relief from his sufferings in convalescence, the criminal seed which Vansittard and his colleagues had sown was bearing fruit.

The funds in the Company's chests sank very low. Since nobody paid any more rates, taxes or duties in Calcutta, no more money reached London and the very shareholders who had so violently defended themselves against the hurting of their dividend feelings now saw

themselves faced by ruin through their own fault. A great weeping and gnashing of teeth filled the old India House in Leadenhall Street which for so many generations had served as a source of wealth for thousands.

Now it was clear: While immeasurable fortunes were being piled up in Calcutta with the greatest speed, thirty million human beings saw themselves driven to the extreme depths of misery. The Indian peasants and weavers had never suffered such despotism as that which was set up by the minor clerks and the subordinate officials. One of the most learned Indian merchants gave vent to his oppressed feelings with the words: "The little finger of the Company weighs more heavily upon us than the hard and bloody fist of Surajah Dowla ever did."

But once again an indescribably horrible and bloody event had to take place before it occurred to the Company to summon to their help the one man who was strong enough to save India. If the Black Hole of Calcutta had given rise to the greatest change in Clive's life as well as in that of the Company, the massacre of Patna was to provide the motive for the changed Clive to appear fully, to rescue British India from the depths of shame and to introduce a new and brighter future.

As mentioned above, Mir Kasim was dragging a large number of English prisoners about with him. When the Nabob saw himself in danger of being defeated and butchered it occurred to him that he held a useful means of applying pressure, in his prisoners. The brave Councillor Ellis answered the Nabob: "Your threats will not prevent the English army from attacking, Mir Kasim." Then the Nabob sent a messenger to Major Adams, the leader of the English and announced: "If you do not leave me alone you will have to bear the consequences! Know that I shall cut off the heads of Councillor Ellis and your other chieftains."

Major Adams answered the Nabob's envoy: "You have Councillor Ellis and many other gentlemen in your power. That is true and I cannot deny it. But if you dare to touch a single hair of their heads you will draw down the revenge of England upon yourselves! We shall pursue you to the very ends of the earth." And he gave the signal for the attack.

Whether the English did not think the Nabob capable of carrying out his threats or whether they still hoped to be able to release their captured brothers in time, at any rate they made the assault. Mir Kasim carried out his threat. The above-mentioned Somru undertook to slay the prisoners. With two companies of Indian soldiers he occupied the courtyard of the prison in which one hundred and fifty imprisoned Englishmen were languishing. He posted his soldiers on the roofs and behind the windows and doors.

Then he gave the signal to begin the massacre.

A few of the most prominent prisoners were called by name and invited to come out of their holes. The unsuspecting Englishmen stepped into the courtyard. They were killed at once. Since the remaining prisoners took good care not to leave the building, the Indians set fire to it. The Englishmen now had the choice between suffocating and burning or being shot down. The most spirited armed themselves with any harmless objects contained in their bare prison cells, with chair legs, bottles, stones and bricks. The soldiers began to be ashamed of the massacre and begged that the prisoners might be given weapons as it was neither brave nor soldier-like to fire on them in their helplessness as one shoots fowls. But Somru remained inexorable. Furious, he struck at those who refused to carry on the bloody task. By the evening, one hundred and fifty bodies were lying in the courtyard. Before it grew dark they had already been thrown into a well.

This grim tragedy was nothing but the fruit of Vansittard's greed, for he had set Mir Kasim on the throne and deposed him again merely to profit by the double change of rule.

This is an account of the event which has passed into history under the name of 'the massacre of Patna'.

The first authentic account of the massacre of Patna which reached London reduced the already dazed general meeting to a state of distraction. At one blow people realised the danger which threatened the Indian settlements and also the board of directors. And the very men who had just been striving to harm Clive, thirsting for revenge, now implored him for assistance.

As Clive was approaching London on his way back from Bath he met the mounted couriers who had been sent towards him from the board of directors.

Clive was stirred to the depths by the news.

When, in Madras, he had heard of the massacre in the Black Hole of Calcutta, he had been indignant; at that time he had spoken contemptuously of the man who had committed the appalling crime and had called him a weak-minded libertine and a massacrer. This time it was his own Company who had ultimately given rise to the tragedy. This time he had not merely to punish a savage Indian prince. This time it was a case – Clive was not blind to the necessity – of taking steps against his own colleagues. The Company's Augean stables must be cleansed. Clive knew that only a Hercules had any prospect of performing this terrible task.

If his strength had ebbed more and more during the time he was scuffling with the vermin, his physical and mental energies increased now that he foresaw the possibility of clearing the baboons out of the way with a few well-aimed blows of the fist. They would cry at the tops of their voices, these Sullivans and Vansittards and their com-

panions; they would wail and groan. For every blow with which he struck them they would seek to avenge themselves with spiteful thrusts with poisoned needles. He foresaw all that distinctly. He was going into a den of plague and he had to count on the fact that he would be infected by the contact. He would take something of the pestilential stink away with him on his clothes.

The more Clive thought about the task which had been entrusted to him the more clearly did he realise how immeasurably great was the risk which he was running. He was staking his honour, his reputation and Margaret's happiness . . . and that at a moment in which their hearts had discovered a love which was deeper and more sincere than all the longing and desire of former years.

"So I must leave the best of all women?" cried Clive in despair. This time Margaret could not, must not accompany him. She had once left her youngest son behind in London and never seen him again – she had given birth to a little daughter in Calcutta, left her behind, ill, and received news of her death soon after the return to London. In the meantime she had given birth to three daughters who were flourishing and growing. Now she was again with child. The parents wanted another son regardless of their first-born, Ned, who was his father's favourite.

If the Moloch, India, now demanded another sacrifice of Clive, he would not surrender and throw away his life's happiness for nothing. He wanted the power to regulate the future of the continent in accordance with his knowledge. The aim was to be a clean, incorruptible authority which should bring justice to India and wealth to England. If this way were laid down wide and even, well and carefully prepared and swept clean, then there was no doubt but that it would lead to the state of affairs for which Clive longed with all his heart.

A few months before, Sullivan had gloated over Clive, had robbed him of his income, had tarnished his name and

reputation. Now the wind had changed, Clive's sails were swelling and Vansittard's little boat lay becalmed. Clive, who was by no means inexperienced in the art of defeating pirates, set about ramming the capitalist privateers.

It was a different Clive who came before the General Council of the East India Company, a new Clive, unknown even to his friends. The glow which had once shone in the young captain's eyes when he had to fall upon the foe and defeat him, had died down. With it the expression of violence had faded from the face and that searching, sweeping look was lacking which sought out the adversary's weak spot. But the mischievous smile had also evaporated, which used to play round the energetic mouth when he had to outwit the enemy. The head which had been so ready to lean on the shoulder was held stiffly erect. In the golden brown eyes which now looked out into the world, clear, calm and almost fixed, there was something of that bold clarity which had once distinguished the looks of Edmund and Margaret. All in all, the directors welcomed a Clive who was less passionate, more self-confident and superior, than anyone had yet known him.

Thundering applause greeted the man who had recently been deeply insulted and on whom all hopes were now hung.

Clive stood up. "If the board puts full confidence in me," he began, "then I shall not refuse to undertake what is desired of me. Until I know that I am in possession of that confidence, however, I am not in a position to make a decision."

"There is nothing which we will not entrust to your Lordship, we are agreed unanimously," answered one of the Johnstone brothers of whom there were five in the council and administration of the Company.

"We are prepared to smooth out every way for your Lordship!"

"Accept! Do accept!" the chorus interrupted the speaker.

"I shall accept as soon as I know with which director I have to work," answered Clive.

Nobody failed to understand him. Glances were exchanged, heads put together. A general murmur arose. Then Sullivan stood up to force Clive to accept. There was an expression of deep earnestness on the face of this man who was prepared to humble himself for the sake of his post. He made no attempt to apologise for that which was inexcusable, or to flatter where flattery would have been out of place, or to plead where too much pleading had been done already. With an expression of absolute sincerity he announced: "I assure the Board that I am prepared to co-operate in all honesty and friendship with his Lordship."

"And I assure the Board that I am not prepared to co-operate in friendship with Mr. Sullivan. Things are more desperate in Bengal than they were even at the time of Surajah Dowlah. Nevertheless, order can quickly be restored provided that you form a Board with which it is possible for me to work. I refuse to cooperate with a man in whom, as I have frequently declared in public, I can place no confidence. This man behaves, has behaved and will continue to behave as one whose principles are diametrically opposed to the interests of the Company. I reject all compromise, and refuse to alter my attitude by a hair's breadth. There can be no truce in the feud between Mr. Sullivan and me."

And Clive left the building in Leadenhall Street.

They ran after him and asked him whom he wished to see in the place of the Director. Then he replied: "Mr. Rous!" And Mr. Rous was elected.

Fresh negotiations followed. The question as to whether the jaghir should be paid or not had not yet been settled. Since it was a matter of a private claim, Clive was prepared for a compromise. He suggested that he should be allowed

to keep the jaghir for ten years and that the income might then fall to the Company.

This offer was accepted.

Clive now thought that the time had come to put forward the demands which he considered of fundamental importance. He declared:

"In the important decisions which will have to be made, I cannot possibly appeal to and make myself dependent on such a large body as is formed by the General Council. Nor do I wish to be outvoted by my own Council as has happened at various times to Mr. Saunders and other Governors. I demand full power for myself alone and I thank my stars that I can act according to my own conscience and only according to my own conscience – independent of the desires and temptations of this world. I am one of those old-fashioned people who regard personal freedom and independence as the height of all happiness."

As was to be expected, they shrank from handing over unlimited power to a single man. Nevertheless an agreement was reached. Clive announced his readiness to act jointly with a committee of three which was to remain completely independent of the General Council.

If Lady Clive could not accompany her husband she wanted at least to take as much care of him as she could. She sent for Mr. Strachey, her husband's private secretary, and handed him a memorandum in which she had enumerated all the things to which attention was to be paid for the care and comfort of her husband. "Don't forget always to write and tell me how his Lordship feels, Mr. Strachey," she said, bravely keeping back her tears, "whenever the opportunity occurs. As you knew, his Lordship suffers from hypochondria and depression. I have decided to engage an orchestra to accompany His Lordship. Please let me have some suitable suggestions."

And Margaret thought how her Bob would now spend months navigating the seas of the world, how he was returning to the damp hot climate and would expose himself to endless weakening struggles. The child which was stirring in her womb would already be big and able to walk and talk before it saw its father for the first time. And she remembered all the horrors of parting which she had once endured when Bob had fought in Bengal and she had stayed in Madras, so far away ... how near she had been then — it scarcely took two weeks to travel from Madras to Calcutta ... from London it took five months at least ... And when Bob returned, how it had wrung her heart when she saw him, sleepless, worn-out, glowing with fever and shaken by cold shivers ...

What a good thing that Edmund was accompanying her husband, what a comfort to know that the two men were remaining together to give each other mutual help in sickness and danger.

And Margaret thought about the Indian nights as bright as day, when Bob and Edmund would sit together in the wonderful Calcutta House, catching mosquitos, smoking their pipes or cigars and discussing the emergencies of the days to come ... and thinking of her, the sister and wife, who, in the city of London, in her palace in Berkeley Square would just be preparing to get up with the rising sun while the men were going to their rest under the setting one.

“God only knows,” said Clive in his first letter which was dated from Portsmouth, “how much I have suffered in my separation from the best of women! The necessity of the thing and your good sense will I am persuaded operate in the same manner upon you as it has upon me. Let us look forward towards the happy day of our meeting which I think cannot be further distant than two years. The education of our children will be a pleasing amusement and

the busy scene in which I shall be employed without embarking on any more military undertakings will greatly shorten our time of absence."

Five months later the second letter went to Margaret from Rio de Janeiro. "Whenever my good friends in England are thinking that Bob will soon arrive in Bengal I am just in Rio and have only covered a third of the distance. We had to weather many storms, twice lost our topmast, on the 15th of August we set the third and last in the place of its two predecessors which had been blown overboard by the wind and had caused a great deal of damage ..."

While the keel of the English ship which was bringing Clive to Calcutta was ploughing through the Indian Ocean, Mir Jafar was standing on the quay of Calcutta and gazing down the Hugli, waiting for the arrival of the only real friend he had met in his life. Whom could he trust if not Clive? He had been deposed by force, pushed back on the throne and finally hurled down again. And he had had to pay dearly for each setting up and expulsion. Until finally £ 800,000 had been paid altogether. How sick he was of all that! Truly the crown of Bengal had weighed heavy on his old head; he had grown melancholy; his eyes had lost their gleam.

Then at last came the news – Clive was returning to India!

What a sight met his eyes! Head over heels they rushed to the ship, Mr. Vansittard and his companions, to secure their lives and their plunder from the claws of the eagle who was setting out to overthrow, to punish and to avenge.

But day after day the old man gazed out in vain across the water. He waited for nearly ten months and still not one of the large, heavily-armed East Indiamen appeared.

Gradually the legs refused to do their duty. Then the

white-haired Nabob had himself carried to the water every morning in a palanquin to carry on the business of waiting, lying on the cushions. One evening when the servants came to fetch their master, they found him dead. With his goggling eyes wide open, he was still staring across the water from which help should come to him.

As Clive stepped on the quay of Calcutta a few days after Mir Tatar's decease, the first thing that was handed to him was the Nabob's will. Mir Tatar left to his friend Clive the remains of his fortune amounting to £70,000.

Then Robert Clive took the money and founded an establishment in honour of the soldiers who had fought for England and India. The interest on this capital flowed to the invalids, widows, and orphans of his old warriors.

With this task Clive began his third and last stay in India.

Now Clive can tell his Margaret about the happy ending to his journey. In a long letter he describes the voyage to her in detail, reciting sad and cheerful incidents. With easy humour and at special length he tells her about a fellow traveller, a Mrs. Summer, and about her diabolical talent for spreading continual uneasiness. In their dilemma the passengers had this woman shut up for fear of not being able to stand her until they reached Bengal. "This lady's father who caused as great a disturbance on board the companion ship as his daughter did on ours, was also shut up in his cabin ..."

For the rest Clive takes great pleasure in telling his Margaret about the many purchases which he has made in Brazil, and tells her that he has sent a packet of topazes and amethysts so that she could have a necklace and earrings made out of them. The remaining stones she could divide among her sisters and friends. In addition he had sent two cases of excellent wine. These were to be well looked after in the cellar of Berkeley Square.

Of course he also speaks about the children, this time at great length. "I hope," writes the anxious father, "at this writing you are safely delivered and of a boy, for we have girls in abundance. I cannot say that I am at all uneasy that our son Ned does not make that progress in the English language which he otherwise would if he had not so many irons in the fire. A master of the dead languages may become master of the living whenever he pleases. His want of ear and awkwardness in dancing, I must own, gives me pain. There he seems to me to be constitutionally deficient, and I would have nothing spared to make him a tolerable proficient in that art. – And give six dozen bottles of the wine I sent you to Lord Powis . . ."

Lord Powis . . . Now already come the cares of the good father of a family, (who looks after parents, wife, sisters, uncles and aunts) for future relations. For Lord Powis has a daughter and it has been arranged that Ned Clive should one day marry this daughter . . .

What a vision! The man who is about to clear out an Augean stable, as he himself says, and to lay the foundations on which the newly carved British Empire is to rest – this man, a few hours before entering upon his responsible office, is occupied with the intimate little cares of his private life.

A victorious general – and a business-like merchant: a statesman of genius, inspired with glorious visions – and a faithful father devoted to the little duties of every day; a reckless gambler like Dupleix – and a prosaic, sober City man; an invalid suffering from hallucinations – and a clear-sighted, incorruptible reformer, called to cure the sick community: such is Clive. Such is the wood from which the man is carved who founded the British Empire by crime and violence, and ensured British world supremacy by righteousness and good deeds.

"The fame of Britain is lost, the name of England put to shame!" Clive began his speech to the High Council of

Calcutta. "Corruption and licentiousness have taken hold of our civil servants and officers, Calcutta is the worst place in the universe. Our administrative organs serve greed and luxury. Five years of bad examples have produced an abundance of abuses. The fate of millions who live crowded together in a thousand towns and villages lies in unworthy hands. Everyone is inspired by the foolish desire to get rich quickly without having to serve for very long and to possess that which only a few can have. All are seized by this desire, they have caught it like a disease. — I have taken over the most unpleasant and horrible task and my honour compels me to perform my task without showing any consideration. I call you to account, gentlemen. I have no personal profit in mind. I shall leave India without having added a single farthing to my fortune. I desire nothing but the public weal. And I vow by the Sublime Being which searches the hearts of all men, and to whom we are responsible, to put aside the abuses and to suppress the vice even if I die in the attempt."

The tribunal had begun. Everyone felt that this world of sin and good living had come to an end. And the councillors who had just been rejoicing over their millions, their palaces, their crowds of servants, their diamonds and their harems, who had gazed down haughtily at the mass of the poor and righteous, now bowed themselves like the poor coolies who feared the whip of the overseer.

Only one dared to advance — John Johnstone, the son of Lord Dumfries, who knew very well that he had a strong support in his five elder brothers. "With what authority is your Lordship actually speaking?" he asked, drawing himself up to his full, lean height.

"My authority is not under discussion, Mr. Johnstone," answered Clive. "My power is comprehensive, it applies to all civil and military affairs and I shall use it in its entirety to clean up India..."

The young man sat down but he made it clear that he would continue the struggle and that with heavy guns, he, who as an artillery officer had fought at Plassey and thought he had decided the battle with his cannons.

Clive took a piece of paper out of his portfolio and went on: "First I decree that every person in the service of the East India Company shall sign an agreement. According to this everyone is forbidden to accept gifts from Indian princes, directly or indirectly, irrespective as to whether landed property, annuities or valuables are involved. Every present the value of which exceeds £ 400 requires the consent of the Board of Directors."

"And he who refuses to sign this undertaking?" enquired Councillor Johnstone.

"... leaves the service of the Company today. I shall replace unscrupulous robbers by capable officials. I abolish private trade ..."

Now other councillors dared to raise their voices. "Must we spend the best years of our life under the glowing Indian sun as though in exile?" A second added: "But you must give the officials an opportunity of earning a satisfactory income ..." And a third added: "It is ridiculous to provide men with weighty authority and to impose a great responsibility upon them and then to expect them to live in want ..."

Clive raised his hand to calm the excited feelings. "I shall answer this objection, the justice of which I appreciate, later. The fact remains that you will each be given this agreement to sign and private trading is forbidden. I come to the next point. All wrongfully acquired goods and sums of money are to be returned."

The indignation rose to open revolt. Even the councillors who had so far lain low and had intended to give in and to wait till the storm had blown over, jumped up.

John Johnstone saw his opportunity. "To be given up? I wouldn't dream of it!" he cried and clenched his fists.

Clive was unperturbed. He was gazing into the distance as though he were speaking to absent people. Quietly he said: "Yes, you will give up the £ 27,000 which you have steadily accumulated by the elevation of Mir Cassim, by his deposition and by the reinstatement of Mir Jaffar. And you may tell your brother, Lord Dumfries' seventh son who is serving here in Calcutta as a clerk, that he will likewise return the £ 6000 which he has received..." For the first time Clive's voice rose as he went on: "The Company is reduced to borrowing money at an extortionate rate of interest from the Indian money-lenders and its employees are piling up fortunes..."

John Johnstone laughed, a cramped, overloud, shrill laugh. "What have we done," he cried, "but follow Your Lordship's example? Give it up? I ought to give up what I have received from Mir Jaffar and Mir Cassim? I, who with my own eyes saw whole consignments of gold and diamonds shipped when Lieutenant-Colonel Clive took to safety the presents he had received from this same Nabob, Mir Jaffar!"

Clive also listened to this challenge calmly. "Yes, I once accepted a gift from Mir Jaffar," he said and his voice was calm and firm, almost gentle. "But you are mistaken if you think that that can be taken as a precedent. I neither asked for nor expected the gift. I received my reward for actual services rendered, since I saved the Nabob from a really dangerous situation. The only gift which I received in connection with the Company was my share of the reward for the victory of Plassey, as the leader of a victorious army. The world may judge whether I had a right to this reward. If all your transactions can stand the light of day as well as mine, Mr. Johnstone, then you will receive the same signs of public recognition as I have done. Never, I repeat, never have my actions done any harm to the Company! But yours have brought it to the

brink of ruin. Once again I request you to sign the paper, Mr. Johnstone, and to restore that which you have wrongfully acquired. If you do not carry out my instructions then I shall have you brought to trial in London."

"Our salary is £60. Our living expenses are many times as much," objected Johnstone and he gave the impression that he had begun the retreat ready to postpone his revenge to a later date.

"Nobody knows your position better than I, gentlemen. I am taking this position into account. I shall raise the salaries of the lower employees especially of the clerks. I myself was a poor clerk, went hungry and ragged through the streets of Madras and know the state of affairs in a clerk's heart. The higher officials will be given shares so that they receive part of the returns and have an interest in the largest possible profit. I shall form a salt syndicate the profits of which will come to you and the share of each individual will be graded according to his rank and length of service..."

Not one of the hearers felt particularly pleased by this prospect of honest profit which was to be attained at the expense of time and labour. The members of the High Council remained silent and each thought that they would soon find a way to oppose this Clive..."

Clive made a last attempt to sketch a picture of the future which would bring about a reaction as he thought and rouse the most indolent soul to enthusiasm. He summoned up all his eloquence. "The day is not far off which will see our trading Company as a ruling body," he cried. "You, gentlemen, will continue to call yourselves merchants but in reality you will be much more like the Roman proconsuls who, provided with tremendous power, ruled over extensive stretches of land. Your ambition will be roused, gentlemen. You will realise that it is more honourable to serve England than one's own purse..."

When Clive saw the hopelessness of his attempts, he commanded that his instructions should be carried out within twenty-four hours and closed the meeting.

"You will have more difficulty in winning the day here than at Plassey," said Edmund, "the whole settlement will rise against you like one man. They will hate you, slander you and malign you ..."

"And am I not accustomed to that? Haven't they always maligned Clive? The insignificant clerk in Madras, the ensign in St. David, the Captain in Madras, the Lieutenant-Colonel in Calcutta - It's cheap to be popular, my friend. Popularity can be bought for half a rupee in the bazaar. And I've never favoured cheap things!"

The following day proved how correctly Maskelyne had prophesied.

Behind Clive's back the merchants gathered together and swore not to attend any more Council meetings, only to pretend to follow instructions but in reality to resist to the very last. In a very short time the administrative machinery had come to a complete standstill and commercial activity was beginning to flag.

"It will come to open rebellion," Maskelyne went on to prophecy.

"Not under any circumstances," answered Clive, "They'll run away with their tails between their legs, you can rely on that..." And he sent for officials from Madras and dismissed all those councillors and clerks who offered an obvious resistance.

As it proved, Clive had estimated the situation correctly. When John Johnstone, still the ringleader, realised the hopelessness of his position he said to his colleagues: "I shall resign my post and return to England. I know where the opponent's weakest point is. In London we'll set the lever in motion to bring about Clive's fall. If he didn't break his neck acquiring his huge fortune he shall come to grief for taking our small ones away."

When the rebels had lost their chief they gave way altogether and Clive won the day.

The first encounter was soon to be followed by the second.

From all the garrisons came the news that the officers were revolting. The storm which now arose was so strong that "not even a Caesar would have dared to defy it."

Clive risked it.

"In a country in which the entire security rests on the power of the sword, the head of the government cannot possibly dare to accept the resignation of two hundred officers! Clive will give way." The members of the deputation, which set out to lay two hundred swords at his disposal, assured themselves of this.

Without hesitation Clive entered the rebels' camp. On the way he was overtaken by a Councillor who had run after him to warn him: "Do not endanger yourself, my Lord, your life is threatened. They say that the mutineers do not intend to shrink from murder."

"These officers," retorted Clive, "may mutiny but they are Englishmen not assassins!" And he added: "Until the soldiers hold their bayonets at my throat, I shan't give way."

He went into the barracks, and let the men assemble while the officers stood apart and put their heads together. Clive greeted the squares who returned his greeting with their usual briskness. Even before he had walked down the lines he knew that no danger threatened from this side. So he let them march away.

Then he noticed that half a dozen officers were holding aloof from the revolt. He called these up to him and said to them: "You take over the command, gentlemen. Since there are not enough of you to perform the task which I shall set you I shall appoint a suitable number of young merchants as officers this very day..."

Then he sent messengers to Madras to fetch reinforcements.

Before he had finished taking his precautions, delegates appeared from the sepoys and assured him of their unshakeable loyalty.

"My sepoys," said Clive and all the love which he had always had for his brown soldiers lay in these words.

"In order not to drag the white troops into the revolt we will make use of the sepoys," he decided. Then he held a trial. The leaders of the revolt were condemned to severe punishments. The merely passive partakers who approached him one after the other, begged for forgiveness and expressed their regret, were treated leniently. He set them at liberty and offered them the prospect of returning to their positions at a later date.

When news came that the revolt had also affected distant garrisons he marched into the interior of the country, arrested the commanders everywhere and set new men in their places.

The news of the severity of his actions spread to the factories. Everywhere the guilty were seized with fright and several of the chief offenders committed suicide. After a few weeks, Clive was master of the situation.

Now he could set about putting the greatest plan of his life into practice. The time had come to lay the foundation stone of the state building of a British India.

He brooded for weeks in his splendid country house. He became more and more silent, more and more unapproachable. He performed his duties as the Governor-General of India which he was – if not in name, at least in accordance with his plenipotentiary powers – he invited the councillors, the most prominent of the freemen inhabitants, the nabobs, the vice-nabobs and rajahs of the various provinces of Bengal to visit him and conveyed to the colonists as well as to the natives a striking impression

of the greatness and importance of the land which he represented.

His table was loaded with the most exclusive delicacies and expensive wines from Europe. But he himself did not drink and only spoke as much as was absolutely indispensable. He did not communicate his thoughts to anyone. His enemies maintained that he was posing.

But he was simultaneously exchanging the most touching letters with Margaret, paying attention to house and home, children and relations, keeping a very careful account of all expenses and sacrificing a considerable portion of his fortune to the task which he had set himself. At the end of the first year he had already paid more than £ 5000 out of his own pocket.

He had now made up his mind not to accept any more money. Any gifts which he did not think he could refuse were handed over to his friends, Maskelyne, Walsh and his secretary, Strachey. And with unmistakable satisfaction he was constantly informing Margaret about the opportunities he had had of bestowing benefits on his friends.

One evening he drew Edmund on one side and came out with a plan to deprive the nabobs of their power.

"Dispense with them altogether," Edmund encouraged him, "and give the organs of the Company who already have the real power in their hands, the signs of their authority as well."

"There could be no bigger mistake than that. The nabobs must be kept. The people are accustomed to looking up to them, the usual rulers will be maintained. Also the power which we actually possess must not become apparent. Frenchmen, Dutchmen and Danes don't need to become aware that anything has changed in India. Let's leave the nabobs on their thrones, let's leave them their palaces, servants and harems, we shall have the power and the money. We shall be the ones who pay the nabobs their salaries."

"But you can't possibly avoid a public recognition of this position?"

"True! I have thought about the way in which I can make such a public recognition," answered Clive. "And I have found a way. The Emperor must acknowledge us as rulers of Bengal, Bahir and Orissa. And he will acknowledge us! The real power has long since slipped from his hands. The nabobs don't take any more notice of him or pay him any more taxes. How pleased he will be when we offer him a fixed salary! He knows that England fulfils her responsibilities. While the nabobs are giving him promises and trying to humiliate him we shall take steps to annex Bengal. The Imperial boy will be happy to exchange a bit of paper with which he gives away what he no longer possesses in any case for good English gold..."

"The Emperor of India as an employed payee of the East India Company!" cried Edmund shaking his head violently, "an idea of Clivian daring..."

Clive began in Murshidabad. On the throne which Surajah Dowla, Mir Cassim and Mir Jaffar had occupied, he found a youth of eighteen years who, incapable of ruling, wasted the income of Bengal on dancing girls, bayadères and prostitutes.

Clive promised him that he should go on sitting on his throne, that he should go on riding on elephants and presenting the appearance of a king. He only had to transfer the exercise of power and the control of the state finances to the English. For this the Company was prepared to pay him an annual income of half a million livres.

"Thanks be to Allah!" cried the delighted boy and he clapped his hands, "now I can have as many dancing girls as I like!"

And he signed what was set in front of him by Clive.

The latter went on to Allahabad, a town on the frontier of Bengal. The Grand Mogul, whose name was Mohammed Muassem Alam Bahadur Schar, was living there because, following a quarrel with one of his visirs, he no longer felt sure of his life in his residence at Delhi.

The act of state took place in Clive's old military tent. Since under all circumstances a throne was required for the ceremony, a camp stool was draped with cloths and placed in front of a suitable table.

On this throne Alam Schah took up his position.

Clive paid homage to him, bowing down before him. His Majesty also bowed. Then the documents which Clive had prepared were read out and sealed with the Imperial seal. With this they became legally valid.

"The provinces of Bengal, Bahir and Orissa are hereby transferred as a free gift of the Emperor to the hands of the East India Company to whom they shall belong from generation to generation for ever and ever." With these words begins the royal proclamation on which the Empire of India is legally founded.

The document promised the Schar £ 325,000 which he was to receive annually for the discharge of all liabilities. Year by year he would receive the immense tribute while the English would henceforward have the use of all the revenue from all lands.

The East India Company undertook to pay the government expenses and the Nabob's pension, as well as to supply the funds for the upkeep of the army.

Clive himself estimated the profit which the Company would make above their liabilities at two million pounds a year. This was the greatest business so far transacted in the history of the world.

"I have been seven hundred miles up the country in the middle of the rainy season", he told Margaret. "His Majesty, the Great Moghul and the Prime Vizier and myself

have been very great together. Matters are settled to the mutual satisfaction of all parties by a firm and I hope lasting peace, so that tranquility is once more restored to these much ravaged and desolated provinces. It would amaze you to hear what diamonds, rubies and gold mohurs have been offered to Lady Clive. However I have refused anything. This will not, however, prevent my sending my wife some valuable presents which I cannot avoid receiving, being 'nagarane' and presented in a public manner. I have informed the directors of the East India Company: 'You are now become the sovereigns of a rich and potent kingdom; your success is beheld with jealousy by the other European nations in India.' I am as happy as a man at such a distance from his wife and family can well be."

Clive's work was done.

Only through the clearing up of the administration would the continued existence of the Anglo-Indian Empire be ensured. For only so long as the reliance in the word of every single Englishman lasted, could one hope to rule the giant realm with a handful of Europeans.

And in very truth Clive's greatest achievement which he himself always called his most important in the few years which yet remained to him, is still operative up to the present day and has rendered possible the miracle of the English rule in India.

He paid for this achievement with his health.

"Your Lordship has no prospect of preserving his life except by an immediate return home," decided the doctor.

And Clive had to obey. Nobody knew better than he that he only sustained himself by uninterrupted and increasing indulgence in opium. The climate demanded this sacrifice several times a day.

He returned by the same way and in the same vehicle in which he had travelled to the Emperor. He went down the Ganges towards Calcutta to reach one of the great East Indiamen which should carry him home.

A sick man, he sat under an awning in one of the long, narrow, gaily coloured, splendidly fitted barques and his glance skimmed over the backs of the coolies who were rowing the boat away, to the thick bushes on the bank, to the rice fields, to the high temple roofs, to the streets along which the princes were riding on their elephants, the messengers on their camels, the fine ladies in their oxen carts and the merchants in their palankeens. Once more his gaze roamed over the whole varied picture presented by India.

Clive had rendered his country a great service. But he had rendered this service to a corrupt country which did not shrink from exposing its greatest man to the intrigues of its smallest men.

The drama which unfolds itself before our eyes after Clive's last return from India began with a cheerful arsis. The grateful directors voluntarily presented Clive with the jaghir for another ten years; they flocked to him to congratulate him and decided to hang a larger than life-size portrait of him in India House in Leadenhall Street, in the very hall where the small seventeen-year-old clerk had once passed his examination and set out on his way to India.

The young King George the Third received his Lordship in a private audience. In contrast to the suspicion with which the monarch regarded the great men of his time, he showed an interest in Clive and expressed his admiration for him. Something attracted the homely, narrow-minded, obstinate George to Clive, who, in spite of all his immense genius, was so homely, obstinate and in many respects narrow-minded. George did not yet know that he would have to share the most terrible peculiarity with Clive, the severe

suffering, the excruciating pain and the dreadful fate of temporary insanity. How curious that the third great man of the century, William Pitt, already Lord Chatham, should be subject to the same disability.

As Dupleix had once done, so Clive brought a diamond gift for his King back from India with him. He presented George with a diamond studded sword and a similar dagger, "to the value of twenty-four thousands pounds," and the Queen with two diamonds "to the value of twelve thousand pounds" as we are expressly informed. And His Majesty asked Clive's advice in Indian affairs, promised him his favour and protection and requested him to take care of the well-being of the nation and the Company in all respects.

It is maintained that George who defended himself so desperately against the bounds of the constitution saw a fellow-thinker in Clive, since the latter had ruled absolutely and despotically in Bengal.

While the conqueror of India was dividing his time between the reception of honours and congratulations, the care for his family and the struggle with sickness, his adversaries were preparing the blow with which they thought to fell him.

At the general meeting of the year 1770, Sullivan succeeded in having himself re-elected. With his entry into the General Directorship, the possibility of destroying Clive seemed to have arisen. Sullivan, the six elder brothers Johnstone and a vain young dandy named Charles Fox, the son of the former Minister of War, who had once supported Clive's candidature for election, formed the chorus of revenge.

The chief part was given to Colonel John Bourgoyne, an extraordinary man who dabbled in the most varied spheres. This unstable fellow occupied himself as a soldier, politician, inventor of extraordinary economic theories and

dramatic author. The gloomy role which Bourgoyne plays in English history and which later reaches its climax with the surrender of Saratoga to Washington begins with the attack on Clive.

They sat together in Leadenhall Street and considered how they could get at Clive's throat, this dreadful man who had abolished private trade and who was, in addition, obstinately striving to bring India into the possession of the British nation.

But it was years before this society of men of honour ventured into the light of day. First they had to rouse public opinion against the victor of Plassey. This end could not be difficult to achieve. They only needed to present Clive as one of the worst of the generally hated nabobs.

These nabobs were of obscure origin; they vaunted their immense wealth senselessly and shamelessly, raised the prices of everything in their vicinity from fresh eggs to Parliamentary elections; their servants' livery threw the uniforms of ducal lackeys into the shade; they drove in carriages more splendid than that of the Lord Mayor but they could not strike the note of good society. They roused an enmity against themselves which was founded on envy and contempt. The comedy writers seized upon them, authors who followed totally different courses in point of view and style, methodists and free-thinkers, philosophers and farce-writers, all were united against the nabobs.

Clive was represented as the worst of all the bad nabobs.

If he had always adopted the simplest habits in the field, if he had always worn uniform and never silken clothes, never used a palanquin, always eaten plain food, his London life offered many points of attack. He had a palace built in Shropshire, a second at Claremont; he dressed excessively richly and elegantly and openly lived in great style.

Thus he made it easy for his enemies to calumniate him. They founded newspapers with the one object of attacking

him. Sinister stories were spread abroad. All the evil which had ever been committed in India by Englishmen was attributed to Clive. Thus in the opinion of the foolish and ignorant who after all form the mass of the people, he gradually became a devil incarnate. In the cellars of the literary world Johnson aimed his words at Clive and all the others imitated him mechanically. Rumours spread that that there was a chest in his home filled to the brim with gold which he had stolen from Murshidabad. It was said of his castle that he had had the walls made so thick to keep out the devil who would certainly appear one day to carry off his living body. And soon people only glanced with a shudder at the windows of his houses, pointed with their fingers and whispered: "There lives the great, wicked Lord who has sold his soul to the devil."

Five years had not yet passed before it became clear that business was going badly in India. The shareholders had decided to fix the dividends at ten per cent regardless of the reserves. Finally these dividends could no longer be distributed.

As a result of an immense drought dreadful starvation set in. This event was also represented as being a consequence of Clive's actions.

One day it had to be admitted in Leadenhall Street that the Company was faced by serious difficulties and that a loan must be sought at once. The position of the Company was precisely the same as that in which the French Company had found itself at the time of Dupleix.

The seed appeared to have matured and the way out to be provided. They only needed to accuse Clive and confiscate his goods and the Company would be saved.

Everybody hated Clive. He was as much maligned in India House as in Calcutta – just as unpopular among the nobles as among the people and the rabble. His adversaries were unscrupulous, cruel and implacable, determined to destroy his fame and his fortune. They wanted to have him

ejected from Parliament and robbed of his titles and his Indian income.

In the year 1772 the moment to strike seemed to have come. Colonel Bourgoyne entered the House of Commons and brought forward the motion that: "the Honourable Lord, Robert Clive, Baron of Plassey, had, as a result of the power which he exercised in India wrongfully acquired the sum of £ 234,000 to the dishonour and harm of the State."

Once again Clive was struck by the glowing heat of savage, senseless hatred which he had so often felt. Once more he saw himself hemmed in by a bloodthirsty mob of enraged enemies. Again and again he had been in this position, as a clerk, as a simple soldier as well as as a General, conqueror, politician, speculator and statesman . . .

And Clive employed the same tactics on the parliamentary battlefield as those which he had so skilfully applied at the sittings of the High Council and on the fields of battle. He saw himself deserted on all sides, faced by superior forces and knew that he must once more put everything at stake. As usual he began the attack at once.

Then he stood up in the House of Commons and his face had that expression of stern, bold, commanding seriousness which so marvellously transfigured his natural ugliness during the last decade of his life.

"Sir," he began his speech, "after rendering my country the services which I think I may, without any degree of vanity, claim the merit of, and after having nearly exhausted a life full of employment for the public welfare, and for the particular and advantageous emolument of the East India Company, I little thought transactions of this kind would have agitated the minds of my countrymen in such proceedings as these, tending to deprive me not only of my property, and the fortune that I have fairly acquired, but of that which I hold more dear to me – my honour and my reputation. I must beg leave to observe to the House,

that presents were allowed and received from the earliest time of the Direction. They have continued to be received uninterruptedly for the space of a hundred and fifty years; and men, Sir, who have sat in the Direction themselves have at several times received presents. This the Direction must know; but I am firmly of opinion, that in honourable cases, presents are not improper to be received; but when for dishonourable purposes, then, Sir, I hold them to be entirely improper.

"I am accused of not having observed the rules of ethics in my dealings with a notorious scoundrel such as Omichand. It was my duty as a politician to deceive so great a villain. People would have me punished for the negotiations leading up to the victory of Plassey and making it possible. They want to confiscate everything which I possess in the world. But I reply, 'Perhaps I should live more contentedly if I had no more possessions.' But I shall always maintain that my behaviour has been irreproachable. Let future generations judge how it is possible that the victor of Plassey should be treated like a sheep-stealer by his own countrymen, the Baron of Plassey who has acquired for the Company an income of four millions sterling and a trade in proportion. It was natural to suppose that such an object would have merited the most serious attention of the Administration; that in concert with the Court of Directors they would have considered the nature of the Company's charter – have adopted a plan adequate to such possessions. Did they take it into consideration? No, they did not! They treated it rather as a South Sea Bubble than as anything solid and substantial. They thought of nothing but the present time, regardless of the future. They said, 'Let us take what we can get today, let tomorrow take care of itself.' They thought of nothing but the immediate division of loaves and fishes. If the authorities had done their duty, the spectre of ruin would not now be hovering above our Indian possessions. Now a scape-goat is sought.

And who has been chosen for that? I who cleared out the Augean Stables of corruption – and Bengal was nothing less than that – regardless of the fact that I was drawing the enmity of a whole class of people upon myself, those very men who thought they could plunder a nation of thirty million with impunity. It is well-known that I was called upon, in the year 1764 by a General Court, to undertake the management of the Company's affairs in Bengal when they were in a very critical and dangerous situation. It is well-known that my circumstances were independent and affluent. Happy in the sense of my past conduct and services, happy in my family, happy in everything but my health, which I lost in the Company's service never to be regained. This situation, this happiness, I relinquished at the call of the Company to go to a far-distant, unhealthy climate to undertake the envious task of reformation. My enemies will suppose that I was actuated by mercenary motives. But this House and my country at large will, I hope, think more liberally. They will conceive that I undertook this expedition from a principle of gratitude from a point of honour and from a desire of doing essential service to that Company under whose auspices I had acquired my fortune and my fame.

“When I arrived in Bengal I had the choice between three ways: the first led to riches and favours, the second led to the throne and crown, I chose the third. I pushed away the hands full of gold which were stretched out towards me, dammed the flood of corruption which was submerging the country, and I praise God and thank Him that He let me do such things. It was nothing but my duty.

“It was that conduct which has occasioned the public papers to teem with scurrility and abuse against me, ever since my return to England. It was that conduct which occasioned these charges. But it was that conduct which enables me now, when the day of judgement is come, to look my judges in the face. It was that conduct which

enables me now to lay my hand upon my heart and most solemnly to declare to this House, to the gallery and to the whole world at large, that I never, in a single instance, lost sight of what I thought the honour and true interest of my country and the Company; that I was never guilty of any acts of violence or oppression, unless the bringing offenders to justice could be deemed so; that as to extortion, such an idea never entered into my mind; that I did not suffer those under me to commit any acts of violence, oppression or extortion; that my influence was never employed for the advantage of any man, contrary to the strictest principles of honour and justice; and that, so far from reaping any benefit myself from the expedition, I returned to England many thousands of pounds out of pocket – a fact of which this House will presently be convinced.

“The committee which was set up, criticised my actions with spiteful meanness and subjected me to a merciless cross-examination. I have acknowledged all the artifices which I have used and I say frankly that I am not ashamed of any of the means which I have employed and that I would employ them again today under the same circumstances.

“Consider my position. A great prince was dependent on my pleasure; an opulent city lay at my mercy; its richest bankers bid against each other for my smiles; I walked through vaults which were thrown open to me alone, piled on either hand with gold and jewels! By God, Mr. Chairman, at this moment I stand astonished at my own moderation!

“My enemies may take from me what I have; they may, as they think, make me poor, but I will be happy. I mean not this as my defence, though I have done for the present. My defence will be made at that bar and before I sit down, I have one request to make to the House, that when they come to decide upon my honour, they will not forget their

Clive's speech made a powerful impression on his hearers.

In the gallery was sitting Lord Chatham, the aged lion of the House of Commons, the greatest speaker of his century, now only a shadow of himself. "I have never heard a finer speech in all my life," he said. And he was not the only one whose heart decided in favour of Clive. "They must come to an acquittal," Chatham went on. "In a political case the best judgement is that which anticipates the verdict of history. And history will vote for Clive."

But the Bourgoyne-Sullivan clique held a different view.

Bourgoyne introduced an amendment clause: "Clive left no system of government behind him in Bengal, only the tradition that with the help of the fear inspired by the English name unlimited sums can be extracted from the inhabitants."

Charles Fox struck the same chord. He, the son of the most corrupt man of the most corrupt age, called Clive, "the model of all plunderers, the source of all robberies . . ."

Shaking his head, Clive looked up at the young dandy whose only remarkable deed was that he had gambled away £ 150,000 in one night.

He did not speak to the House any more, he only whispered: "Take my fortune but save my honour."

Then he left the House of Commons.

The whole day, the following night, another day and yet another night, the battle raged.

Finally when the sun had risen for the third time on the Clive debate, the judge, Alexander Wedderburne, brought forward a motion of compromise.

Round Clive it had long since become night.

He, the proud and the haughty, who even in the most difficult and critical moments had relied entirely on himself

and had never made himself dependent on the favour or disfavour of others, he had to humble himself and place the decision concerning his honour in the hands of others.

For hours on end he sat in his arm chair, practically a dead man without speech or movement. Only occasionally the lids rose above the golden brown eyes and he glanced through the window into the street to see whether the messenger was coming with the verdict. When the dreams faded which made it possible for him to endure reality and the consciousness of an empty and horrible present burst, harsh and hideous, into the world of phantasy, he seized one of the little brown pills to give fresh wings to the dance of the varied shadows.

At last the messenger arrived.

Whatever, he may have done "Lord Clive did at the same time render great and meritorious services to his country," so ran the motion of compromise which was unanimously accepted.

His fortune was saved.

And his honour, his name, his fame?

A compromise! A bitter laugh sounded after the messenger as he hurried away. At whom was he laughing? Who had always been talking about dignity, ethics, correctness and rank? Watson, the Admiral, the man of compromise. But he had died of a broken heart because he had voluntarily refused to take a share of the spoil and his last words had been: "This Clive is a genius after all!"

A genius! Again the humiliated man's dreadful laugh rang through the splendid rooms of the palace in Berkeley Square.

Now he had to take leave not only of a task which had long since been performed and to a large extent undone again, not only of fame and fortune – but also of Margaret, of the crowd of lovely, growing daughters, of Ned who wrote such good essays ... really perfect English ... and he had lost his awkwardness as well ... he would

marry the little Powis, that was settled, and the children loved each other . . . not quite so tempestuously, passionately, and blindly as he himself had loved . . . in those days when he fled from lost Madras with the picture of a girl he had never seen in his hand, while the song of an Arabian troubadour echoed across the Black Town . . .

. . . Thank God, Margaret and the children had said good-night today as usual. There had been so much love in the pressure of those lips, so much familiar understanding, so much gratitude for a — compromise which saved his fortune and did not tarnish his honour and name any more than they were tarnished already . . .

Night was falling. The 22nd. November 1774 was drawing to its close. The noise of the streets was dying away.

Now the man could be called, the old friend out of Uncle Dan's room . . .

Clive, who had grown into an old man in a day and a night, looked about him. And the silken hangings fell from the walls, and the damask-covered furniture crumpled up . . .

He stood again in the chalk-white room . . . there was the wooden table, the stool, the plain bedstead . . . the hat hung by the door . . .

Clive knelt down. The expensive chest of drawers turned into a wooden box; he raised the lid and rummaged out a pistol and a little leather bag from among all sorts of objects.

He was still panting; he passed his hand over his brow which was covered with cold sweat. Now he tested the weapon, cocked it and fired. With a clear ring the flint struck the metal and the spark flew.

The old man shook some powder out of the bag into the barrel, pushed the bullet after it and rammed it firm. Then he primed it with the necessary little heap of powder. Each

of his movements showed how familiar he was with the weapon.

With faltering steps he returned to his seat and sat down. Now he brought the mouth to his temple and felt the iron tube pressed, round and cold and sharp, against it.

At this moment his features brightened and his face assumed that expression which we adopt when we meet a dear, old friend.

Calmly, almost cheerfully he looked into his old friend's bony, hollow-eyed face. And Bob spoke: "You have kept to your pact, sir, didn't appear when you weren't called. Now I'm calling you, do your duty and don't leave me in the lurch as you once did ..."

"What else keeps me?" he went on. "I have had everything that a child of this world can have. What task was there which I could not perform? The battle is over, there's no more advance, Sabu Jang, 'the Bravest in War', he can desert ... People will say I had a stroke or accidentally took an overdose of opium. My children will be ashamed of me. My God, they condemn the taking of one's own life, the dear, dear, good men and Christians, in order that we may have time to inquire into ourselves and to do penance and utter the prayers of the dying. The Romans desired a sudden death, to pass away as with thunder and lightening right to God's judgement seat with the last sigh, of one's own free choice ... the Romans, conqueror, 'O Caesar divus' ... I am curious to know what you will say ..."

Then the Baron of Plassey laughed: "The baboons will say it was grief at the spots they have smeared on my picture ... as on that of everyone else ... Columbus they accused on account of the despotism which he exercised and on account of the heavy expenses which his undertakings involved and he died broken in body and mind. Walter Raleigh they condemned to death, imprisoned him in the tower for thirteen years with his wife and finally

executed him – shouting spitefully that he would find the gold in the other world which he had not been able to find in this. Fernando Cortez they accused, robbed and left to die in solitude. La Bourdonnais they locked up in the Bastille and they only set him free to die. Lally, who paid his soldiers with his own money when the Company couldn't pay any more, they executed, and he died without blame ... and Dupleix ... Dupleix ... Dupleix ...”

Clive bent his fingers. Ringing, the flint struck the metal; flashing, the spark flew. The shot rang out. The pact was fulfilled.

NOTES

I. The latest Clive biography is the journalistic one of R. J. Minney (London 1931) which, however, adds comparatively little new material to the old Gleig, the accurate Forest and the critical Macaulay.

7. Mogul is a special title for the Indian Emperors of the Timur family from the Persian word 'Mughal' meaning 'Mongole' ever since Baber replaced the Afghan dynasty in Delhi by the Mongolian one at the battle of Panipat in 1526. Until 1707 the Mogul dynasty kept the Empire prosperous under six rulers each of which was a genius in his way. Under the Shah Alma it came to an end. In 1857 the last Grand Mogul, Bahadur Shah II, was deposed and interned in Rangoon. His sons and grandsons were executed.

7. The Persian Shah, Kuli Khan Nadir captured Delhi in 1738, stole the famous old Peacock Throne studded with thousands of precious stones and carried it off to Persia with him.

21. Pondicherry was the chief possession of the French East India Company which was founded in 1634 by Colbert and in 1719 was incorporated in the 'Compagnie des Indes' established by John Law, (the inventor of paper money). This 'Compagnie des Indes' survived the collapse of Law's undertakings and was not liquidated until 1769. Pondicherry, like Chandernagore is still in the possession of the French to this day.

23. We have accurate information as to the appearance of the fortresses of Madras, St. David and Pondicherry since we possess a large number of contemporary plans on which the position of the houses and fortifications and the distribution of the guns can clearly be recognised. Accord-

ing to the copperplate engravings showing us the streets and houses, the White Town of Madras had the appearance of an average English town of the period.

36. From the memoirs of this Ananda Ranga Pilai (which were written in Tamul on olles leaves and translated into French in 1894) we know the details of the conversations carried on between Dupleix, Jan-Begum and Ananda. These notes are remarkable among other things for the peculiar point of view of Ananda who, as a Hindu, regards the Europeans with the same astonishment and frankness as we should criticise the conversations of Indian princes. From him too, we know that Dupleix constantly referred to Admiral La Bourdonnais with the words 'this cur'. We are informed about the jealousy between Jan-Begum and Ananda not only by the Indian's diary but also by Dupleix' various notes.

36. The caste divisions of the Indians date back to the Aryan wanderings (2500 B. C.). The highest caste are the Brahmans. Each caste is many times sub-divided, some having as many as eighty sub-divisions. The warrior caste is the second.

59. 'Nizam' means 'supervisor', 'administrator'. 'Nizam-al-Mulk' is the equivalent of 'Vice-regent of the Empire'.

59. 'The Carnatic' means 'the Lowland'. 'The Deccan' means 'the South'. The coastal districts have recently been included in the Deccan. The Deccan used to be called the Indian Highlands, with the exception of the Malabar-Coromandel coast and the river districts of the Indus and Ganges.

60. The Mahrattas are the original inhabitants of the ancient Indian region of Mahraschtra. In the middle of the seventeenth century they founded an independent realm which collapsed a hundred years later.

46. Gainsborough's famous portrait of the forty-five-year-old Baron of Plassey gives us an impressive and convincing picture of the mature man.

231. Actually Clive would not admit later that he had been on bad terms with all his companions and had suffered hunger and want during the first years of his stay in India.

"He always used to speak of the time in cheerful and lively tones, mentioned all the people who had been kind to him, referred to names and incidents and appeared to have forgotten all the evil, zealously employed in repeating only the best about each of these men."

246. Buddhism has almost died out in its Indian home. Today 73 per cent of the inhabitants of India belong to one of the thousand sects of Hinduism (Shiva and Vishnu). The rest belong chiefly to Islam which is constantly gaining ground against the caste spirit of Hinduism. Of the 320 million inhabitants of India about three million are Christians.

369. 'Jaghir', literally 'the place of taking'.

378. This Walter Reinhard naturally suffers at the hands of English historians. He cannot have been wilder or more bloodthirsty than other praetorians.

409. It is this Bourgoyne who in a famous letter later upholds the view that the Indians should be exterminated by being presented with cloths infected with the smallpox. See 'Manitus Welt versinkt' by the author of this book. In 1777 he attained a sad world-famousness by the capitulation of Saratoga as a result of which 5000 English soldiers fell prisoners to Washington and the American borderers. Returned to London, he accused Warren Hastings and attacked him in a similar way to that in which he had attacked Clive.

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IN this romance I have tried to present a portrait of Jack Donne, who, after a wild youth, became Dr. John Donne, the most gifted and saintly dean St. Paul's has known. Had Jack Donne reincarnated today it seems unlikely that he would have entered the Church, or having entered, would have long continued in orders. In him was too much of the new wine of inspiration which breaks the old bottles. The adventure of the spirit in the ocean of Truth is not today limited, as was the case in the seventeenth century, to orthodox waters. His vision was wide and clear-sighted. Perhaps he is one of the very few deans whom clericalism would not have prevented, had he met Jesus Christ in the flesh, from becoming a disciple. It is easy to imagine him, while all his fellow-divines found a safe anchorage in Pharisaism, riding in the company of Paul to Damascus and experiencing that transformation which comes only to the utterly sincere seeker in the Mysteries.

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